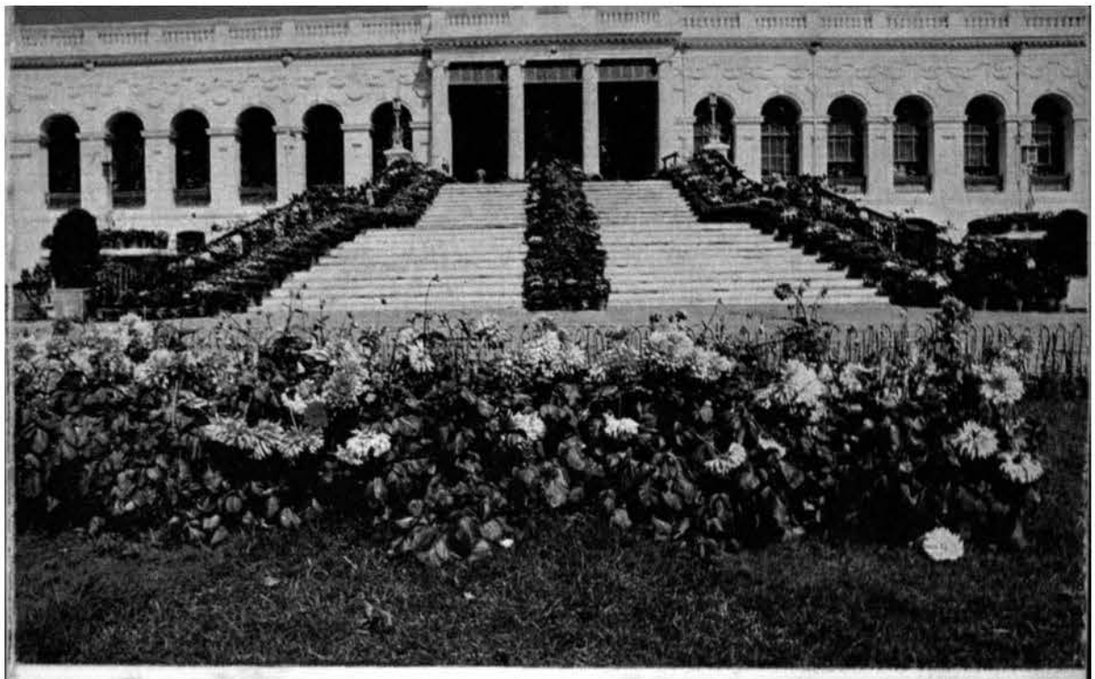
THE NATIONAL LIBRARY AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN INDIA



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THE NATIONAL LIBRARY AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN INDIA 1986

Released on the occasion of the
150 anniversary of the Calcutta
Public Library
1836—1986

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN INDIA

CALCUTTA
NATIONAL LIBRARY
1986

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FOREWORD

In the year 1986 the National Library remembers its ancestor, the Calcutta Public Library, founded 150 years ago. The occasion gives the National Library an opportunity to review its own position in relation to public library development in India. I am very pleased that we are able to bring before you this short booklet in which Smt. Kalpana Dasgupta, Librarian, National Library, discusses the present position of the Library recalling its linkages to its ancestor, Shri Phani Bhusan Roy, the distinguished library scientist, discusses the Public Library and Public Library Movement in India for our benefit and Shri M. N. Nagaraj, who spent his working life at the National Library, examines the concept by which he worked. We are also grateful to Professor Probir Roy Chaudhury who examines the public library movement in West Bengal—a movement he has personally done so much to shape. We have been looking for a short and interesting statement about ourselves now for some time and I hope this booklet will provide it, placing it in the context of the public library in India.

I have the pleasant duty to thank Shri R. P. Dutta, Superintendent (Tech.), Shri A. N. Patra, Superintendent (Tech.), Shri Paritosh Mandal, Technical Assistant, Shri Sanjib Sengupta, Senior Assistant, Shri S. P. Ghosh, Assistant Micro-Photographer, Shri Bhaskar Sarkar, Stenographer and Shri Kajal Bhattacharjee, typist all of whom helped in the production of this booklet.

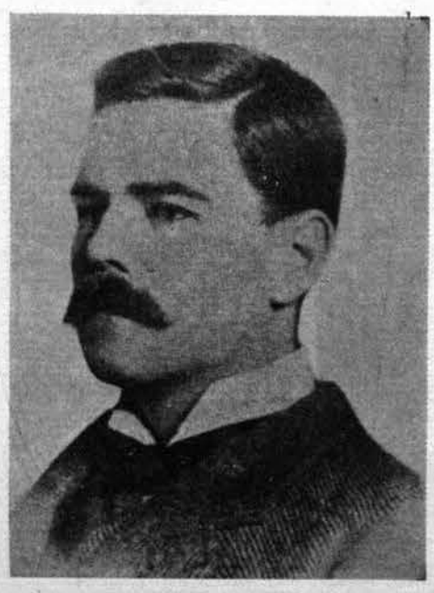
National Library,
Calcutta-700 027.

Ashin Das Gupta
Director

The library moved temporarily to Fort William in July 1841; and finally to Metcalfe Hall in June 1844. The Hall had been built to do honour to Charles (later Lord) Metcalfe, and was to house a public library. Later the idea of a new library was dropped and the Hall was offered to the Calcutta Public Library; so that from two separate moves came a library, the first of its kind in India.

Pyari Chand Mitra, the father of the Bengali novel, was Librarian from 1848 to 1866. He made the library a centre of library and intellectual activity.

Bipin Chandra Pal was Librarian in 1890-91.



John Macfarlane from the British Museum was the first Librarian (1901-6). He arranged the holdings systematically. Initiated the publication of catalogues, and improved the service.

Harinath De, scholar and linguist, Librarian from 1907 to 1911.

John Alexander Chapman, Librarian from 1911 to 1930. He made many experiments in how books may be preserved in a tropical climate.

K. M. Asadullah, Librarian from 1930 to 1947. He started library training classes in 1935.

B. S. Kesavan, Librarian from 1948 to 1963, saw the shifting of the library to its new home and gave it much of its present character.

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

by

SMT. KALPANA DASGUPTA
Librarian

The National Library regards the Calcutta Public Library as its ancestor and as the year 1986 marks the 150th year of the foundation of the Calcutta Public Library, the National Library considers it to be a good vantage point to recall the past, consider the present and plan for the future.

Calcutta Public Library :

The Calcutta Public Library came into existence mainly due to the enthusiasm of Mr. J. H. Stocqueler (pseudonym of Joachim Heyward Siddons), the Editor of the 'Englishman'. This was a venture of the upper class citizens both Indian and British during the early years of 19th century to establish a General Library for the people of Calcutta. I quote Mr. Stocqueler's Memoirs in this context :—

"Receiving a good deal of countenance from the upper classes, my project was now submitted to a public meeting (August 1835), over which Sir John Peter Grant, one of the judges of the Supreme Court, presided and was so well received that subscriptions rapidly poured in, and books were presented. I was appointed Honorary Secretary to the Library, and received very gratifying public tributes to my humble endeavours to supply a real want." (India's National Library by B. S. Kesavan)

The resolution passed at that public meeting was most significantly worded and ran as follows: "That it is expedient and necessary to establish in Calcutta a Public Library of reference and circulation, that shall be open to all ranks and classes without distinction, and sufficiently extensive to supply the wants of the entire community in every department of literature." A provisional committee consisting of 24 members was appointed to accomplish these objectives. The Committee had a good representation of the European community in Calcutta and Baboo Rasik Krishna Malik and Baboo Rasamay Datta were the only Indian members.

Prince Dwarakanath Tagore was the first Proprietor of the Calcutta Public Library. In remembrance of this office patronage, the National Library at Belvedere, still has his marble bust at the entrance.

The main collection of the Library was started by accepting donations from private individuals and by the transfer from the Library of the College of Fort William of a valuable collection of books consisting of 4,675 volumes by the Governor-General, Lord (then Mr. Charles) Metcalfe.

The Calcutta Public Library was opened to the public on the ground floor of the residence of Dr. F. P. Strong, Civil Surgeon of the 24 Parganas, in 1836. It was temporarily shifted to Fort William in July, 1841 and then finally housed in the first floor of Metcalfe Hall on the Strand Road. Many eminent persons of Calcutta, both Indians and Europeans joined the Library either as Proprietors or as subscribers over the years. Among the Indian patrons mention may be made of Dwarakanath Tagore, Debendranath Tagore, Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Ram Gopal Ghose, Rustomjee Cowasjee, Raja Satya Charan Ghoshal, Nrityalal Sil, Pratap Chandra Singh, Radhanath Sikdar, Peary Chand Mitra, Rasamay Datta, Rasik Krishna Mallik, Sashi Chandra Datta, Kishori Chand Mitra, Sambhunath Pandit and Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar. The European Patrons, worth mentioning are T. B. Macaulay, J. C. Marshman, Lord Metcalfe, James Prinsep, Sir John Peter Grant, J. E. D. Bethune and H. Beveridge.

The transfer of the Library to the Metcalfe Hall helped in increasing the membership of the Library and offered opportunities for development. Mr. Stacy, the Librarian resigned in 1848 and Peary Chand Mitra was promoted to the post of the Librarian. The Management of the Library was entrusted to a Committee of 3 Curators chosen by the Proprietors and first class subscribers who had one year standing.

The Library's income was derived from the fees paid by the Proprietors and the subscriptions received from the members. Occasional donations were also received.

Working of the Library :

The Committee was entrusted with the responsibility of book selection for the Library. A list of new books received from local and foreign booksellers, was circulated among the members of the Selection Committee before they sat together to actually select the suitable titles. The Committee also considered suggestions from the members for which a Proposal Book' was maintained. Books were purchased both from the markets of London and Calcutta. In selecting the books, the Committee did not respond to the actual demand of the members. Since it was a Public Library, there was sometimes great demand for light literature. But the Committee purchased a large number of serious works for research purposes. I quote Shri B. S. Kesavan in this context. "In the report of 1850, we find that the Library, started collecting books in Gujarati,

Marathi, Pali, Ceylonese and Punjabi. Donations of books were received from the Government of Bengal and the North Western Provinces. An application for Tamil and Telugu books were also made to the Government of Madras. Donations from individuals enlarged the Library's collection considerably".

Arrangement of books :

At the initial stage, the Library was open access. The members could browse through the collection and pick up books according to their choice. But gradually, large number of books and journals were found missing and it was decided that Requisition Slips would be introduced in accordance with the rules observed in large libraries in Europe. The fixed location system for shelving of books was also introduced and in 1853, "It was decided to classify books according to 28 main subject divisions with a number of sub-divisions. This arrangement continued till the end of the career of the Library with some occasional modifications. The Calcutta Public Library compiled and published 3 (three) catalogues of which the last issue was published in 1898. The entries in the catalogues were in the classified order. Monthly list of additions were also issued regularly for the benefit of the users." ("India's National Library" by B. S. Kesavan)

Readers' services :

Besides the proprietors and subscribers, poor students were allowed to use the Library free of charge for a specific period of time.

The readers' services of the Library was kept open for the public from early morning till evening. The Lending Section opened at 9 a.m. and lent books to the members till 6 p.m. The Library did not work on Sundays and on the following holidays :

> New Years day, Saraswati Puja, Queen's Birthday, Good Friday, Durga Puja and Christmas Day, a total of 10 days.

From the year 1857, the critical years of the Calcutta Public Library started mainly due to political reasons. The spirit of friendliness so far between the two communities, Indian and British, which helped to build up the Calcutta Public Library was gradually weakened due to mistrust between them. However, due to the efforts of Mr. A. Mackenjee, one of the proprietors of the Library and a High Official of the Government of Bengal, the management of the Library came under Municipal administration during the year 1890. But these changes did not improve matters very much and the condition of the Library continued to decline.

The Imperial Library :

Lord Curzon, after his arrival in Calcutta, visited Government Offices and public organisations of the City. He noticed two libraries with rich collections of books. But both of them were in very bad condition. One was the Imperial Library which had been formed in 1891 by combining a number of Secretariat Libraries, and the Calcutta Public Library which was in a miserable condition. Therefore, he suggested an amalgamation of the collections of both these Institutions and opened a Library for the use of the public. After one year of preliminary preparations, such as transfer of books of the Imperial Library from Esplanade to the Metcalfe Hall and other details, the Imperial Library was opened to the public on 30th January, 1903. These arrangements were confirmed and validated by the Imperial Library Act 1902 (I of 1902). Famous Librarians and scholars have headed the Imperial Library from its inception. The first Librarian, John Macfarlane was an Assistant Librarian of the British Museum prior to his appointment. The great scholar and Librarian, Harinath Dey needs no introduction. Mr. J. A. Chapman and Khan Bahadur K. M. Asadullah were well-known Librarians of that period. The policy of acquisition of the Library was more or less enunciated by Lord Curzon in his speech at the opening ceremony of the Library : "The general idea of the whole Library is that it should contain all the books that have been written about India in popular tongues, with such additions as are required to make it a good all-round library of standard works of reference".

Under the able guidance of competent Librarians, the Imperial Library developed into a well-organised Library of reference. The Imperial Library also made great contribution towards the library movement in the country in different ways. With this background in view, one looks at the present National Library. It is on this solid plinth, that the National Library rests today.

National Library :

The National Library, as it is today, has come a long way since it became the National Library, by an act of Parliament : The Imperial Library (change of name act) passed in 1948. Scholars and personalities with vision towards scholastic development like Shri C. Rajagopalachari, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Shri Humayun Kabir helped to house the National Library in the beautiful Viceregal Lodge at Belvedere after independence. Shri B. S. Kesavan, first Librarian of the National Library supervised and saw the shifting of the Library to its new home and gave its present character both professionally and administratively.

As the Library developed, the Main Building at Belvedere was found too small for the growing National Library and a 9-storey annexe with an attached auditorium and canteen was built and completed in 1966. Presently, the Library stores its materials in the Main Building at Belvedere, 9-storey annexe, the new Stack building in its campus and the Esplanade Reading Room.

To streamline the functioning of the National Library, many important committees have been set up over the years. The most important and comprehensive report was submitted by the Reviewing Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri V. S. Jha in 1969. The Library still follows the basic objectives laid down by the Jha Committee which were accepted by the Government of India as the aims and objectives of the National Library.

1. Acquisition and conservation of all significant printed material produced in the country to the exclusion of ephemera ;
2. Collection of printed material concerning the country wherever it is published and also acquisition of a photographic record of such material that is not available within the country ;
3. Acquisition and conservation of manuscripts of national importance ;
4. Planned acquisition of foreign material required by the country ;
5. Rendering of bibliographical and documentation services of retrospective material, both general and specialised ;
6. Acting as a referal centre purveying full and accurate knowledge of all sources of bibliographical information and participation in international bibliographical activities ;
7. Provision of photo copying and reprographic services ; and
8. Acting as the Centre for international book exchange and international loan.

The National Library today serves as the permanent repository of all reading and information material produced in India, as well as all printed material written by Indians and concerning India written by foreigners wherever published and in whatever language. The National Library is the recipient of all published material in India under the Delivery of Books Act 1954 as amended in 1956. It is also the depository of publications of the UN and its major agencies.

Administrative and functional set-up :

The National Library is a part of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Culture) of the Government of India. The

Director is in overall charge of the Library with two professional Librarians under him. The Director and the Librarians are assisted by Deputy Librarians on the professional side and by a Senior Administrative Officer and two Administrative Officers on the administrative side.

The Library complex is at present accommodated in the following buildings :

(i) Main Building ;

(ii) New Stack Building ;

(iii) Annexe Building, and

(iv) Esplanade Reading Room.

The Set-up of the National Library broadly consists of (A) Professional Divisions (B) Conservation Divisions and (C) Administrative Divisions.

The various Divisions of the Library have been organised on a functional basis with a view to utilising its resources to the maximum extent as also for improving its services to the readers.

(A) **Professional Divisions**

The Professional Divisions of the Library look after the acquisition, processing and maintenance of the reading materials and reader services. The Divisions are headed by Assistant Librarians, unless mentioned otherwise.

(a) **Acquisition, Processing, Maintenance and Reader Services Divisions :**

1. Acquisition (Book Order)
2. Acquisition (Book Selection)
3. English Serials
4. Indian Official Documents
5. Foreign Official Documents
6. Maps and Prints
7. Gift and Exchange
8. Science and Technology
9. Rare Books
10. Asutosh Collection
11. Processing
12. Printed Catalogues
13. Reading Room
14. Lending Section
15. Bibliography (General)
16. Bibliography (Special)

17. Main Stack (including New Stack and Newspapers Reading Room at Esplanade)
18. Annexe Stack and Reading Room
19. Children's Library
20. Stock Verification.

(b) **Indian Languages Divisions :**

1. Assamese
2. Bengali
3. Gujarati
4. Hindi
5. Kannada
6. Kashmiri Section
7. Malayalam
8. Marathi
9. Oriya
10. Punjabi
11. Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit
12. Sindhi Section
13. Tamil
14. Telugu
15. Urdu.

(c) **Foreign Languages Divisions (Other than English) :**

1. Afro-Asian Languages (including Arabic & Persian)
2. Slavonic Languages Divisions
3. Germanic Languages
4. Chinese
5. Romance Languages

(B) **Conservation Divisions :**

These Divisions headed by Assistant Libraries, unless otherwise mentioned, are concerned with the preservation of the valuable collections of the Library by the application of various techniques and processes, viz.

(1) Microfilming, Photo-copying, Xerox-copying etc.

(2) Reconditioning the materials through the process of binding, repairing, etc. and reinforcement by way of lamination, mounting, encasing, etc. and

(3) Application of chemical processes.

The following are the Conservation Divisions :

(1) Reprography Division.

(2) Preservation Division.

(3) Laboratory Division, headed by a Chemist.

(C) **Administrative Divisions :**

The Administrative Divisions are concerned with the Library personnel, maintenance of buildings, security, maintenance of buildings, security, garden, etc.

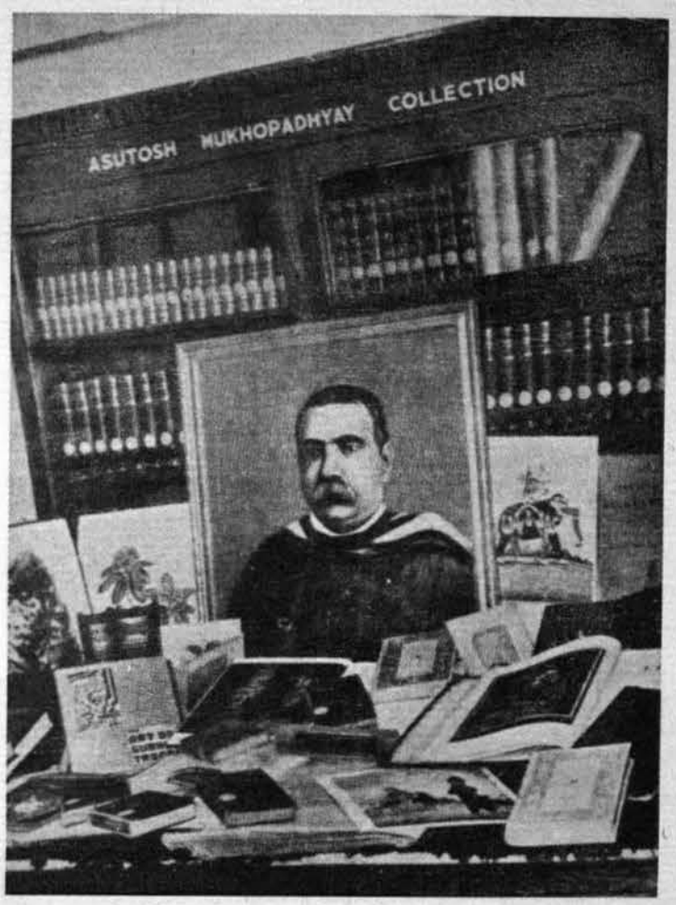
The Administrative Divisions consist of (1) Administration Proper under the charge of a Senior Administrative Officer and two Administrative Officers (2) Hindi Cell, under the charge of Hindi Officer (3) Security Division under the charge of a Security Officer and (4) Garden Division under the charge of a Garden Superintendent.

Present Collection :

The Library, presently has more than two million units in different forms. The variety of material available in the Library are reading material in all major Indian languages, European languages, other than English, Arabic, Persian and important Afro-Asian languages ; Indian official documents, British Parliamentary papers, U.S. Government documents, publications of United Nations and allied agencies, Gazettes and Periodicals. Presently the Library receives approximately 20,000 titles of periodicals from different sources. Such material, like maps, microforms, rare books and large newspaper collection are important parts of our rich collection.

Special collections :

The National Library proudly cares for very rich collections donated by scholars from different parts of the country. The most important and perhaps the largest personal collection housed in any National Library of the world is the Asutosh Collection which presently has 83,000 units. The Buhar collection of rare material in Arabic and Persian is another prized collection of the Library. The Vaiyapuri Pillai Collection which has important rare books and palm leaf manuscripts was gifted to this Library by his heiress. Personal collections of scholars like Sir Jadunath Sarkar Collection, Professor S. N. Sen Collection are also very valuable. Personal papers of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the original manuscript of poet Jibananda Das are worth mentioning.



The Asutosh Collection on the fourth floor of the Annexe has a reading corner working from 9-30 to 6.

A general view of the main reading room.

Readers' Services :

The National Library renders its services to readers from different parts of India and the world on 362 days in a year. The Library is closed on 3 national holidays i.e. 15th August, 26th January and 2nd October. The Main Reading Room can accommodate about 320 readers and there are special accommodation for research scholars in the alcoves and carrels. The Main Reading Room has an open access reference collection of about 10,000 books. The Annexe Reading Room also has a Reading Room which accommodates approximately 70 readers at a time. Since the Annexe has very specialised collections, like Government documents, periodicals and unbound newspapers, this Reading Room is mainly used by research scholars of very serious pursuits. Other than these Main Reading Rooms small reading areas are there in the other floors of the Annexe specially the Asutosh Collection and the Rare Books. The Esplanade Reading Room which can accommodate 22 readers, renders services to serious scholars who consult old and bound newspapers. All Indian citizens above the age of 18 can become the members of the Library.

Conservation activities :

This is a very specialised activity for preserving the collection for posterity. Three major activities are involved in this. Preservation by lamination, mending and binding, chemical treatment such as disinfection, fumigation, deacificication etc. and microfilming and photo reproduction. For all these we have specialised sections headed by technically competent persons.

Printed catalogue and bibliographic services :

The Library has special divisions handling the publishing of printed catalogues and preparation of special and general bibliographies. The Library has published so far about 50 catalogues and has been giving bibliographic services to its varied clientele. An ambitious project of Bibliography of Indology in 56 volumes was started after the acceptance of the Reviewing Committee recommendations. Some of the volumes have been published and the work is now in progress. The receipts of the National Library under the Delivery of Books Act are the basis of the production of the Indian National Bibliography.

Future plans :

Modernisation in different areas is the need of the day and future plans of the National Library are geared towards that. The Library

proposes computerisation of its different activities in a phased manner. Bibliographical control is almost non-existent in India both in the publishing world as well as in the Library field. It is almost impossible to know what has actually been published in India in different languages and also to know which library has what in its collection. It is in this context that the National Library has planned two projects for future bibliographic control of reading material in India.

The new schemes for development :

I. The Library Modernisation Schemes : Computerisation of the National Library will be in a phased manner as follows :

1. Automation to be introduced for acquisition and serials control. The work will begin with the English language materials received by purchase, under the D.B. Act, and through Gift & Exchange.

This will monitor the books purchased by the library as also those received by the library under the Delivery of Books Act. The Library will also use the computer to discover the gap between National Book Production and the actual receipts in the library under the Act.

2. Computerisation of the processing system according to International standard. This will also facilitate the production of the Indian National Bibliography.

3. Information Retrieval System for readers' services.

Considering the size of the library, the receipts and the readership, these three phases will be drawn out over a period of time.

II. National Union Catalogue : The National Union Catalogue should be a Central record for location of materials in addition to being the basic bibliographic source for verification, description and identification. It should aim to locate at least one copy of every book, so that research scholars in India and abroad can be certain of the availability of such material in India.

A comprehensive National Union Catalogue will also help the libraries in their acquisition programmes in ways listed hereunder :

(1) Avoiding duplicate purchase of expensive items on a National basis, (2) Filling in of gaps on a National basis and (3) helping in inter-library loan.

The National Library in collaboration with the Central Secretariat Library will begin a project for cataloguing research material in Humanities and Social Sciences in all the major libraries in the Eastern and Northern

Zones. The work will naturally be in phases. This scheme will provide what has long been regarded as an essential bibliographical tool for Indian libraries. In fact India is one of the few countries in the world with major library holdings, in all branches of human knowledge, but without any systematic bibliographical control.

III. Library of Microforms: The Reviewing Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. V. S. Jha recommended that the Library's stock should be surveyed and lacunae mapped out. Once the lacunae in our collection is known, efforts should be made to acquire such titles which will be of use to the research community. Since a large number of titles not available with us, but required by us, will not be available in the book market, efforts should be made to identify them in libraries in India or abroad and acquire microform copies of the same.

The National Library undertakes a new scheme of adding a wing to the Library's collection of reading material in the shape of microforms. This is a vital project for the preservation of the Indian National Heritage and will mean the storage of rare and valuable material as also the newspapers in the holdings of the National Library as well as other libraries which are without such facilities.

IV. National Book Production Statistics (Monitoring Cell): One of the major problems of the National Library in particular and the Indian libraries in general is that we do not have any definite idea about the number of books produced in India every year. It is widely acknowledged that the receipts under the Delivery of Books Act at the National Library and the other three recipient libraries fall much short of the number of books produced in India. But there is no means of discovering the dimension of this gap or of forming any accurate idea of the actual statistics. Since the Library now has had several recommendations from conferences and committees which it sponsored on an all-India scale to the effect that a separate organisation should be set up by the library to monitor book production statistics, the Library plans to establish such a cell and use the statistics so compiled for national and international bibliographic information.

Building Programme:

One major constraint which has so far remained a major problem in the National Library is that of space. With the increasing input over the years, the building programme has not really been what it should have been. Presently a 3-storey building is under construction which will eventually house the administrative sections of the Library but presently after

completion, it will house 6 Indian Language Divisions and the Foreign Official Documents Division. This building is likely to be used from the middle of 1987.

Ambitious plans are being worked out for a building to house three million books for the National Library within its campus. This will facilitate the entire modernisation programme in its various aspects. This will be a fully air-conditioned building which will eventually be converted as the main National Library Building. The historical Vice-Regal Lodge may then be used for specific purposes.

References :

(1) Kesavan, B. S.—India's National Library, Calcutta, National Library, 1961, 300 p.

(2) Annual Report of the National Library 1984-85, Calcutta, National Library, 1986.

PUBLIC LIBRARY AND PUBLIC LIBRARY MOVEMENT IN INDIA IN PERSPECTIVE

P. B. Roy

Why this study of public library situation in India :

Concept of the public library system as one of the essential social components for the very survival, as well as for progress and development of a modern society, is yet to be accepted effectively in practice in many countries in the modern world including India. On the other hand no movement for acceptance of a new idea and a corresponding change in either the physical or the social or the conceptual world, however harmless such changes may seem to look to others, was ever allowed to achieve its goal without opposition. It is particularly true in cases of proposals for socio-economic, socio-cultural or other similar changes. The reasons are obvious. There are always contemporary beneficiaries of an existing social situation who would never agree to allow the situation to change to their disadvantage. The intensity of a struggle for such a change will depend on alignment of social forces favouring or disfavouring such a change, as well as, the nature of the stake involved.

It will be interesting to study the public library situation in India from such an angle. Hence this study is offered as a food for thought for those who feel interested.

Periodisation for convenience of study :

For convenience of study the library situation in India is proposed to be divided into three periods as follows :

(i) Pre-public library period—

will cover Ancient, Muslim and early British period of Indian history till the establishment of the first "public" library in India i.e. 1770 when the "public" library at Fort William was established.

(ii) Public library period—

will cover the period from the establishment of the first "public" library to date. This may be sub-divided into two further sub-periods as follows :

(a) Public library—pre-law period—

will cover the period from the establishment of the first public library to the first demand for public library law in 1930.

(b) Period of public library law—

will cover the period from the first demand for public library law to date (1930-to date).

Pre-public library period :

From the point of view of the present study the pre-public library period is of limited academic interest only. The libraries in that period of Indian history were owned and used by important social groups like religious groups, or, by very important individuals like monarchs, important landlords, eminent scholars and the like. Such libraries were not accessible to the members of the public in general. They did not, therefore, have any direct link with and impact upon lives of the common people and hence they have no particular importance for the present study.

Modern public libraries are the creation of the educated middle class of the British period of Indian history. They are neither the progeny nor the carriers of the tradition of the libraries of those early days. The libraries of the early days might, at best, have helped in the development of the outlook of important individuals of later days and nothing more.

Public library period : first phase :

Hickey's Gazette mentions that even as early as in 1770 the Fort William had a public library kept by one Mr. Johns. This was the earliest one of its kind in India. Subsequently libraries started being established at different places mainly at the initiative of benevolent social leaders who looked at the problem from a philanthropic angle and as a problem linked up with and subordinate to that of education. Those libraries were subscription libraries open to members who were agreeable to pay subscription and furnish references, if so required.

At a later stage political groups felt interested in involving themselves with library activities partly from the same philanthropic consideration and partly for some direct and indirest political advantages that they could get

out of this involvement. As a matter of fact, for good or for bad, socio-political forces trying to derive benefit on latter considerations are still quite active in the public library field of India.

However, all those social groups, organising and looking after the maintenance of library services rendered through some disjoint units to a very limited section of the community, did not vary much bother about the quantity and quality of the services being rendered. They could not possibly imagine any extensive and intensive involvement of public library activities covering all facets of social life.

The libraries during this period mostly depended for services, on voluntary workers, and for finance, on subscriptions received from members and donations received from wealthy patrons. The British Government then ruling the country showed its concern by giving small, and often occasional, doses of assistance but never took any concrete step for solution of the problem on a practical scientific basis though it had first hand experience of a law based public library system working in Britain itself. Perhaps their experience at home made their representatives here careful and apprehensive.

During the first decade of the 20th C a notable effort for development of public libraries was made by Shri Sayaji Rao Gaekwad of Baroda who had the imagination to utilise the services of Mr. W. A. Borden, a student of Melvil Dewey, and got established a chain of public libraries with a hierarchical structure and tried to bring about a qualitative change in the public libraries situation and public library thinking in the country. However, this also smacks of an attitude of benevolence and does not recognise the essentiality of public library services backed by law and independent of personal attitude of any benefactor, for the very survival and development of any modern society.

Public library period : Second phase : Struggle for Public library law :

A real qualitative change was brought about in the situation by two outstanding exponents of public library cause in India who came in contact with the public library system at work in Britain and in some other European countries. These persons are Kumar Munindra Deb Rai Mahasaya of Bansberia, Hooghly in West Bengal and Dr. S. R. Ranganathan regarded as the father of libraries and library science in India and rightly mentioned by B. I. Palmer as "one of the immortals of our profession."

They, especially Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, realised that the public library system in the world, that was coming up, was not merely an adjunct to the social component of education but was itself a full-fledged component by its own right and will have relation with and influence upon all other com-

ponents of the society and will be concerned with its very survival and development.

Such an important social component cannot be allowed to be set up and maintained depending on the good wishes and ideas of some individuals and groups however extraordinary and powerful they may be. It will require continuous support of some social tool or expression of social determination, which would not allow things to fluctuate according to the whims and fancies of politicians and administrators, who may come to the social arena from time to time. Only a sound library law can determine on an objective basis, the structure function, management and finance of the public library system which can survive unimpaired all changes in government and administration.

This realisation brought about a qualitative change in the views of the leadership. It changed the character of the library movement by converting it from a socio-philanthropic movement with limited capacity and outlook, to a scientific socio-professional movement for all round improvement of a very important component of the society. Interestingly henceforth the struggle for establishment and development of public library services was converted, more or less, into a struggle for library law. It brought about an alignment of social forces, veiled as well as open, in favour of and against public library law.

Drafting and submission of Public Libraries Bill :

For the use of the leaders the library law of England was ready at hand and so a draft bill was prepared by Dr. Ranganathan borrowing some ideas from the said law and was placed before the All Asia Educational Conference, Library Service Section in 1930.

Dr. Ranganathan was decidedly the guiding spirit behind all attempts for library legislation in India. He went on submitting plans after plans and bills after bills for library legislation and library development both at the Union level, as well as, at the state level. Because of his personal eminence as well as contact with and influence upon some important individuals, he was successful in getting his ideas codified in laws in three states only viz. in Madras (now Tamilnadu) in 1948, in Andhra Pradesh in 1960 and in Mysore (now Karnataka) in 1965. Maharashtra enacted library law in 1967 and West Bengal in 1979 but they have not followed the Ranganathan pattern in full.

Attitude of the rest of the states towards library law :

Rest of the states received library bills drafted either by Dr. Ranganathan himself or by some other professional experts, either individuals or

groups, but none of them has taken any concrete step for getting a law passed. They occasionally show their concern by administrative gesticulation of different kinds. They have taken nearly four decades after the first library law was passed in India to come even to this stage.

Why this anomalous situation :

One is tempted to ask for the reasons behind this anomalous situation. Even after about fourteen decades since the passing of the Public Library Act, 1850 in Britain and after over four decades since independence only about one-third of India in area and population is covered by public library law and has some structure of an organisation for rendering of public library services of whatever limitations these may be.

Government action at theoretical level :

The question is how could we come to these state of affairs and have continued to remain there during all these years ? Is it because the government both at the state as well as the central levels have different views on usefulness of public libraries and have decided not to take any action ? The answer is an emphatic "NO". Otherwise we cannot explain several historical facts, such as,

1957	(i)	Setting up of the Advisory Committees for Libraries (Chairman K. P. Sinha).
1959	(ii)	Appointment of a Committee for drafting of a Model Public Libraries Bill (Chairman Dr. D. M. Sen).
1961	(iii)	Announcement in the Lok Sabha by Dr. K. L. Shrimali (the then Deputy Minister of Education, Govt. of India) that some of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Libraries had been accepted and will be implemented and some more were under review.
1964	(iv)	Appointment of a Working Group by the Planning Commission. The Working Group prepared a report reviewing the library situation and also drafted a Model library Bill.
1966	(v)	Setting up of a National Advisory Board for Libraries to advise the Central Government as well as State Governments on all matters pertaining to libraries.

State Governments also were no less active. Some of them set up Committees, working groups and the like for reviewing library position and drafting of public libraries bill. Dr. Ranganathan so long as he lived went on submitting bills after bills expecting that something would be done by the State Governments. Some individuals as well as professional associations also submitted draft bills hoping every time that something good would come out of it.

We refrain from offering any comment on the report of the Committee on National Policy on Library and Information System submitted during the current year only because a reasonable period for consideration, acceptance and implementation of the accepted recommendations to clearly indicate the Government attitude towards the problem is not yet over.

Government action in practice :

The first concrete action that the Government took towards development of public libraries during the Second Five Year Plan period was the creation of the State Central libraries in different states and the district libraries in different districts. Government also started on a selective basis to adopt some subscription libraries to the sponsored category and went on giving them doles of a few thousand rupees annually for contingent expenditure and appointed librarians to look after such libraries at ludicrously small pittance. All these are non-integrated independent units trying to maintain their unenviable existence, mostly as subscription libraries, as best as they can.

The next step taken by the Government of India for development of public libraries was the establishment of the Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation in 1972 and virtually to delegate all its responsibilities in that field to the unfortunate shoulders of that poor ill financed body. The Memorandum of Association of the Foundation was, however, drafted in an extremely ambitious manner so that nothing that is possible to be done in the field of libraries and library science remains out of it.

Unfortunately during the fourteen years of its existence what the Foundation has in concrete terms been able to do is nothing more than giving doles of small assistances to a select number of libraries for purchase of documents, equally casual and inadequate assistance for preservation of rare and worn out documents and occasional assistance for publications of professional meets.

In clause No. 3(iii) the Foundation has recorded its dream about building up "a national library system by integrating services of" various categories of libraries. In clause No. 3(iv) it has expressed its wish for

propagating "adoption of library legislation in the country". The Foundation itself knows and will have to admit that it has been ineffective in this respect, except, if at all, helping some of the states to come to their gesticulating stage as mentioned earlier.

One is again tempted to ask for reasons behind this contradiction between what is said and what is done at different levels.

History of Britain as guide to help analyse situation in India :

Historians say that history is a very interesting and important source of education. Though it does not and cannot repeat itself in toto and in details, there are instances where historical situations do agree with each other very interestingly in broad outline. As Britain was the first source of our inspiration for library law it will be quite interesting to look at British history for this purpose.

Library law did not come to Britain just for the asking. It had to be fought for and often quite bitterly. Any good book on public library movement in Britain during the 19th and early 20th C will amply vindicate this statement. Significantly the first law proposed was an adoptive one which would be operative only in areas where the local bodies adopted the Act and decided to tax the property owners for raising funds for the purpose. The rest of the country will remain out of its area of operation. Those who opposed and did not like the law based public library system to come up, launched their attacks with several arguments like : 'it meant ... ... general increase of taxation ..... taxation of the whole community for the benefit of the few ..... taxation without consent of the persons taxed ..... would tend to check the private enterprise ..... food for body more desired than food for mind ..... municipal corporations had usually sufficient work in hand without having the additional duty imposed on them ..... BY THE INSTITUTION OF LECTURES THESE LIBRARIES MIGHT BE CONVERTED INTO NORMAL SCHOOLS OF AGITATION' (capitals used by me).

The last one contained the reasons behind the real fears of the conservative forces. We need not be astonished if any of the arguments are echoed by their counterparts living in our country.

The final form in which the law was passed shows that a substantial amount of the sap had been taken out of the law through imposition of several restrictive provisions inside the clauses. Briefly these are :

(i) operation, scope for adoption was confined to borroughs having population exceeding 10,000 according to the last count taken thereof by authority of Parliament ;

(ii) a two-thirds majority of votes of the burgesses assembled in a duly convened meeting was necessary to secure adoption ;

(iii) if the adoption of the Act was rejected no further application for its adoption could be made within the next two years ;

(iv) the Act gave the town council no power to purchase books ;

(v) the town councils were given power to levy a rate up to ½d in the £ of annual value of the property.

Those who championed the cause of unfettered free library service to one and all had to continue their battle almost with as much vigour in order to remove, through one amendment after another, the throttling effect of the restrictions or at least to mitigate their rigours as much as possible. The situation seemed to be moving towards brighter days only after the penny rate restriction on taxation for libraries, which had completely crippled public library service in Post-War I England, was removed by an amending Act in 1919. Thus even a very conscious electorate as in Britain had to take about sixty years' time to fight for and establish a reasonable base for free public library service.

Library situation in India : Alignment of the social forces :

In India the situation is tilted very much to the advantage of the conservative forces in the society who, as in England, prefer maintaining the status quo for sound or unsound fears. The situation has been complicated by some confused and some clever groups deriving advantages from the existing anomalous situation.

Attitude of the educated communities :

Ordinarily it may seem that the educated communities are vitally interested in an intensive spread of education. As a corollary, it is also presumed that they are equally interested in an extensive and intensive development of all types of library services which alone can ensure successful distribution of education and culture by giving a firm non-formal support to a formal programme. This presumption should not be taken as an axiom true for all members of the community.

Speaking generally the educated communities have largely taken education as a tool for earning their livelihood and so do not show much concern whether the education that is given to their children is really sound and library oriented or not. The teaching community, the most important component in the education distribution system often go merrily by selling dubious articles in the name of education. Quite frequently they derive

additional advantages in this bewildering situation through trading in various types of labour saving devices in form of note books, lessons sold in tutorial homes, coaching classes, private tuitions and what not. They do not care to protest even when having a library, which is a stipulated condition, even now, for affiliation of schools, is blatantly violated or by passed in different cunning ways. Would be administrators and social leaders brought up under such aridzone conditions of libraries from the very start naturally develop very little idea about or love for library services.

Attitude of the socio-political leaders :

Speaking in an equally general way we may state that to the socio-political leaders the subscription libraries which exist in different areas and are erroneously called as "public libraries" are sources of socio-political position and power. The beneficiaries of the existing state of affairs may not, therefore, very much like these institutions to go out of their clutches and control and become independent of them on the basis of some independent legal support unless they are completely compelled for economic reasons.

Even trade unions and other similar social organisations who claim to be fighting for all round welfare of the people in various ways are found mostly engaged in fighting for economic and political gains. They do not show much concern for development of the public library system which may directly go to help their members in their educational, cultural and other information based socio-economic activities.

Attitude of the administrators :

The administrators also are a group of beneficiaries of the present situation. As per existing practices all government financial assistances are bestowed through the administrators. It will be quite human for such administrators to be extremely reluctant to part with such powers which put round them some special halo before the recipients of the assistances.

Failures and lapses of the professionals :

Of all the social groups, the library professionals is the most important group to be fully aware of the role and importance of the libraries in a modern society. In a period of transition particularly when opposing forces are likely to hamper its social acceptance and progress there is a need for the professionals and their professional bodies to work in close co-operation with the progressive and sympathetic sections of the society who can understand the problem and can actively help in development of an integrated public library system. Ranganathan, because of his personal eminence,

could utilise his personal contact to attain this objective, obviously to a very limited extent.

After Dr. Ranganathan eminent individuals and associations who came to lead the profession could not maintain, far less raise, the pitch and tempo of the movement to a level from where their demand for public library law could be given a useful and effective hearing by those who control our destiny. Some of them submitted library bills no doubt but for the rest they depended entirely on the good wishes of the busy socio-political leaders. By and large the professional bodies have failed to fully realise that the very base of a net work of law supported public library system still does not exist in nearly two-thirds (over 60%) of the country, in area as well as population, and that no solid structure of library services of different types could be built up without this base which will act as the foundation. With this not-quite-clear an idea about the library situations in the country they organise their conferences and seminars as some ritualistic get-togethers to discuss some comparatively less important economic and administrative problems on the one hand and some bit too technical and technological problems on the other. They do not even go on, at least equally ritualistically, to reiterate from every professional platforms their demand for law based public library system for each and every state of India just to show their awareness of the problem and record their support for the cause.

Attitude of the general public :

Attitude of the general public significantly differ between groups who are or are not able to utilise library services. To the users, the public libraries are sources for borrowing recreational literature against subscription. Ill-equipped public library units, that are there in the country now, are not capable of rendering other forms of services expected from a modern public library.

Bulk of the non-users consist of illiterate, semi-literate or neo-literate individuals. They are incapable of deriving pleasures through reading of sophisticated recreational literature stocked in such libraries. They turn to cinemas and TV's as easier and better alternatives.

They cannot clearly foresee what an efficient up-to-date public library system can really do for them. They return social callousness with equal unconcern.

Attitude of the no-changers :

Because of the weakness and disarray in the forces favouring a public library law to build up a sound integrated public library system, the conservative forces favouring a status quo in India do not show their teeth very

openly as they did in Britain. They go on manoeuvering and frustrating all moves for library legislation in extremely clever ways.

A look at the history of the movement for library legislation shows that whatever bills were drafted and ultimately submitted to Government either as a result of public initiative or of Government initiative, met the same fate of being put to cold storage and soon forgotten. In some cases even demands for library legislation were straightway rejected for interestingly opposite reasons.

In 1949 Shri P. K. Deshmukh, Education Minister, Central Provinces, refused library legislation because he was "not sure that a library bill will accelerate development of libraries when there are a few libraries in existence" in that state. In Travancore an official opposed the library bill saying "we do not think that a library act is necessary. We have already many libraries." The two arguments together, one coming from a man of politics and the other from a Government administrator, sound queerly similar to the sarcasm contained in "Heads I win, Tails you lose". We cannot have the library law on either consideration.

What is to be done now :

Analysis of conflicting social forces active in the library field made above, if accepted, will convince us that we cannot achieve our objective and get library laws passed by carrying on the movement in a sporadic amateurish manner. If we really mean business, like the demand for independence in pre-independent India, demand for library laws for all states should be echoed year in, year out from every professional conferences and seminars of library and information science specialists till appropriate public opinion is created in its favour.

We must make all efforts to convince the public that library services are not a sort of "welfare services" which can be provided for and looked after during periods of comparative affluence but may have to be curtailed or even dispensed with during periods of financial stringency. That will be very much risky and will expose the society to various kinds of dangers and difficulties both at the personal as well as at the group level.

Library services would, therefore, have to be accepted as one of the essential services needed for survival and development of a modern society just like health and education. It must not be relegated as a secondary responsibility to a busy Minister but should be placed as a full time responsibility of an energetic Minister.

It will be useful to remember that some of the basic components like state central libraries, district libraries etc. which together will go to constitute the public library system, have already been set up in different

states. What remains to be done is to integrate the components into a whole system by spelling out through a law the connections and relations of the component parts and their duties, responsibilities and modes of functioning.

Such a system can function efficiently if, and only if, an adequate, uninterrupted non-fluctuating flow of funds is assured for running of the system. It will be quite unwise to tag the finance up with any specific tax item which is liable to fluctuation for different political and administrative reasons. It should, therefore, be a general charge on public funds as so many other charges have been. The fund should be available for equitable distribution throughout the system according to the needs of different areas. There should be no "matching grant" strategy which inevitably produces regional disparities in library development.

All other details can be worked out easily if the need for a law based public library system is accepted by the society. It now devolves on the library professionals to take leadership role in organising public opinion in favour of a public library law for a public library system. We have only to be sufficiently alert to see that no harmful or restrictive provision creeps into the law, as it did in Britain, to make our attaining the objective difficult or delayed.

History of public library movement in Britain has amply vindicated that struggle for a public library system is a facet of the struggle for social justice and social progress and may not always be won easily. We should take lesson from that history and carry on with our movement with an objective approach to the whole problem. Delay is dangerous in all fields and doubly so in activities meant for removal of social ills or harmful social lacunae.

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY IN PERSPECTIVE

M. N. NAGARAJ

At the vertex of the library structure in many countries of the world stands a national library, distinguished by the 'dignity of the building, the richness of its collection, and the wealth of its resources'. Many of the national libraries have a rich history dating back to centuries. The National Library of India also traces its origin to a comparatively old institution—the Calcutta Public Library which was set up in 1836. If the Calcutta Public Library had continued its separate existence it would have been 150 years old to-day.

The national library has been looked at with reverence and awe—as a 'symbol of old-style scholarship' and standing aloof from other libraries of the country. The role and functions of the national library has come under scrutiny and analysis in recent years. This was necessitated by the fast changing library and information programmes the world over. The National Library, right from its early days, has geared itself to its responsibilities and duties—which itself has changed over the years.

The following essay deals with the topic of national libararies in two sections. The first section deals with the national libraries in general and the second section gives a brief note on the National Library of India.

SECTION ONE

Introduction :

Unlike public, university or special libraries—which are a readily recognisable genus of libraries, the national libraries are surprisingly difficult to define and they exhibit great variety in size, nature, and function.

ALA Glossary defines a national library as a library designated as such by the appropriate national body and founded by the national government. Its functions *may* include the comprehensive collection of the publication output of the nation ; compilation and maintenance of a national bibliography ; a comprehensive collection and organisation of publications on an

international scale for the scholarly community, the production of bibliographical tools, the coordination of a national library network, the provision of library services to the national government or some of its agencies, and other responsibilities delineated by the national government.

Harrod's Librarians' Glossary defines a national library as a library maintained out of government funds and serving the nation as a whole. Usually, books in such libraries are for reference only. They are usually copyright libraries. The function of such a library is to collect and preserve for posterity the books, periodicals and newspapers published in the country. This is best done by a law requiring publishers to deposit copies of all publications issued by them, and by purchasing books published in other countries. A copyright clause normally has penalty clauses to enable the act to be enforced. The functions of national libraries vary considerably. They may compile union catalogues, produce a national bibliography, publish a retrospective national bibliography or act as a national bibliographical centre.

The New Encyclopaedia Britannica states that in most countries there is a national or state library or group of libraries maintained by national resources, usually bearing responsibility for publishing a national bibliography and for maintaining a national bibliographical centre. National libraries strive principally to collect and to preserve the nations literature, though they try to be as international in the range of their collections as possible. Most national libraries receive, by legal right, one free copy of each book and periodical printed in the country.

Everyman's Encyclopaedia mentions that most countries have a national, or state, library, or libraries, which are supported by the government and have particular responsibilities for maintaining national collections and bibliographies. Most of these libraries also have copyright privilege, that is, they receive as a legal right a copy of each book and periodical published in their country.

The foregoing paragraphs indicate that there is no definitive formal statement of the meaning or significance of the term national library. Most of them, as well as the definitions found in other standard reference books, monographs and periodicals on librarianship use such words as may, usually, vary, most and such other terms.

National Libraries of the World :

There are nearly one hundred national libraries in the world to-day, either officially titled as such or are characterised by their governments and its scholarly community. A quarter of them were founded before 1800 ; a

half of them were set up between 1800 and the beginning of the Second World War ; and the last quarter were established after the World War.

Efforts for Definition :

After the Second World War a large number of seminars, symposia, conferences, workshops and meetings have been held at national, regional, and international levels to discuss the nature, aims, special functions and aspects of national libraries. The Unesco and the IFLA have taken extra responsibilities in organising and following up such meets. A quick survey of such meetings and statements by leading professionals will indicate the diverse views on the subject.

Unesco Conference on Bibliographical Services, 1950 :

Unesco's General Report of the Conference on the improvement of Bibliographical Services, 1950, sets out the requirements for a national bibliographical service which has featured in most later discussions on the function of the national libraries. They include the provision of an effective system of legal deposit, the need for national planning bodies, for a national bibliography and specialist bibliographies on a regular basis, for general and specialised bibliographical and information services, and effective inter-library cooperation. It is also necessary for the national library to be involved actively in the dissemination of bibliographical information, to institutions and individuals, and in research and professional training needed to do these things effectively at national and international levels. International loan schemes and international exchange of publications are part of the functions of the national libraries. It further recommended that in every country there should be established a recognised planning organisation, the nature of the organisation to be determined by national circumstances.

IFLA Congress, Copenhagen, 1952 and 1955 Congress, Brussels :

In 1952 the Copenhagen Congress of IFLA established a Section on National and University Libraries. Discussions relating to the national libraries takes place every year.

In 1955 an International Congress of Libraries and Documentation Centres was held in Brussels and preliminary work for a Symposium of National Libraries in Europe was begun.

Library Trends, 1955 :

"Current Trends in National Libraries" was the theme of an issue of *Library Trends* in 1955. David C. Mearns, in response to Managing Editor's

insistence to write a 'summarizing chapter' because the "world needs to know what a national library is, where they come from, what seems to be their basic functions", wrote that "perhaps the world will one day hit upon a definition." He further said that the national libraries are universal in scope and that "all national libraries do not occupy the same position in the library systems of their country. Some may conceivably be independent or aloof; others are legally charged with fixed responsibilities and firm primacy; others still, exercise authority loosely and only by common consent. No national library is, perhaps, quite exempt from rivalry and competition dissidence and the threat of pretenders, and, on the whole, this is salutory for the national libraries. It keeps them alive and alert; it makes them show cause for their persistence; it rouses them to contemporaneity; it adduces them to bestir themselves".

Unesco Study, 1958, Liebaers :

A Symposium on Methods of Library Work held at Brussels in 1957 was followed up in 1958 by a Unesco study by Herman Liebaers of the Royal Library, Brussels. He enunciated that the national library is a leading library of the country and is distinguished by the extent of collections, variety of material held and diversity of specialised departments. "It has a general and a national responsibility". But the conference group rejected this opinion.

Symposium on National Libraries in Europe, Vienna, 1958 :

The Symposium on National Libraries in Europe held in Vienna in 1958 is a landmark in the history of national libraries. The Symposium marks a further step forward "in identifying, and proposing solutions to, the problems faced by national libraries, in particular in identifying their actual and desirable functions". One important paper given at Vienna was by Sir Frank C. Francis, Director and Principal Librarian, of the then British Museum, London. He writes "Speaking broadly the national library in any country is the library which has the duty of collecting and preserving for posterity the written production of that country. To this basic duty other duties are added, depending on a variety of factors, such as the quality and range of the collections which form the main stock of the library, the conception of the library's purpose held by the government, the size of the country and the existence of other comprehensive collections within easy reach of each other, and so on".

The summary of discussions of the Vienna Symposium mentions that the very diversity of the libraries represented in Vienna was illustration of the wide range of institutions covered by the term 'national library', and

for that reason the symposium considered it pointless to define it. However, the following functions currently devolving upon the majority of national libraries were analysed and discussed : acquisitions, nature and organisation of the services offered by a national library, personnel problems and professional training, buildings and premises, legal deposit, finance, protection and conservation of documents, the role of the national library in the bibliographical activities of a country, the national library as a national centre of bibliographical information, national bibliographies and specialised bibliographies, problems of cataloguing and classification, new methods and techniques in the storage and retrieval of information, and function of the national library as regards international cooperation in the field of bibliography.

Library Association, London, 1963 :

At the conference in Bangor in 1963 of the University and Research Section of the (London) Library Association the following seven functions were identified as functions of a national library : (1) Collecting national literature, (ii) Collecting foreign literature, (iii) Serving as a book museum, (iv) Giving the public access to the collections, (v) Carrying out information service and bibliographical activity, (vi) Functioning as a training centre, and (vii) participating in national library planning.

During the period 1963-65 IFLA undertook a comparative study of functions of national libraries of Britain, France, USSR and the USA.

Seminar on the Development of National Libraries in Asia and Pacific Areas, Manila, 1964 :

Encouraged by the success of the Vienna Symposium and in response to requests from member states of the region Unesco organised a Seminar on the development of national libraries in Asia and the Pacific Area which was held in Manila in 1964. Kesavan, a former librarian of the National Library, Calcutta, directed the Seminar. The Seminar stated that the functions of an individual national library may be largely defined by the social, cultural, economic and geographical conditions. There are, nevertheless, certain functions which it is the responsibility of the national library to develop. Broadly these are : to provide leadership among the nation's libraries ; to serve as a permanent depository for all publications issued in the country ; to acquire other types of material ; to provide bibliographical services ; to serve as a coordinating centre for cooperative activities ; and, to provide services to government.

Humphreys, 1964 & 1966 :

The great variety of national libraries and the divergant views on their place in relation to libraries and librarianship in their own countries impelled IFLA to attempt a further assessment of their responsibilities. Humphreys who had devoted a lot of attention to the study of naional libraries and who was vested with the responsibility of preparing papers (1964 & 1966) on the subject quoted the stated functions of several national libraries and categorised the functions of national libraries as fundamental, desirable, and inessential, the last being national library service functions which do not necessarily have to be carried out by the national library. This categorisation has stood the test of time and is often quoted by subsequent authors.

The fundamental functions are : the outstanding and central collection of a nation's literature ; legal deposit, coverage of foreign literature, publication of national bibliography, national bibliographical information centre, publications of catalogues, and exhibitions.

Desirable functions are : Inter-library lending ; manuscripts ; and research in library techniques. Inessential functions are : International exchange service ; distribution of duplicates ; books for the blind ; professional training and assistance in library techniques.

Quito, 1966 and Colombo, 1967 :

The Quito meeting of experts on the national planning of library services in Latin America (1966) and the Colombo meeting of experts on the national planning of library services in Asia (1967) discussed the problems of national libraries in the two regions.

Centre for Statistical Data on National Libraries, 1971 :

In 1971 a monitoring cell for the national libraries, styled as centre for Statistical Data on National Libraries was set up in the Royal Library at The Hague and it is collecting information relating to national libraries all over the world.

What is not a National Library :

In 1970 Unesco recommendations concerning International Standardisation of Library Statistics offered a definition of national libraries and decided on some of the functions that a national library should perform. Libraries which may be called "national" but whose functions do not correspond to the definition stipulated should not be placed in the "national libraries" category.

Conference of Directors of National Libraries, 1974 :

To grapple with problems of national libraries a new forum styled as Conference of Directors of National Libraries emerged on the library scenario in 1974 and listed some eleven functions as activities of national libraries. The Directors of national libraries regularly meet and discuss problems relating to national libraries.

A Reasoned Inference and Conclusion :

The deliberations of various groups mentioned above clearly indicate that a firm definition is illusive. Several Unesco and IFLA seminars ended by 'agreeing to disagree' on what was a national library. Now efforts are being made to determine what a national library *does* rather than what it *is*, because all the later discussions on the subject goes back to the thesis put forward by Esdaile in 1934 that "Uniformity is not to be expected ; the political and social traditions of one country will produce a quite different type of library service from those in another".

A national library is the principal, most comprehensive library which serves a particular country's citizens. The national library in the 18th and 19th centuries was usually a reference library and its services consisted of making reading place available, bringing materials to its readers for study in its reading rooms, and producing a catalogue of its collections. As time has gone by, however, other functions have been demanded, justified and (sometimes very gradually) added. For example, the British Library has added a lending function ; US Library of Congress which is the main library of the legislative body has developed specialised information services in special subject areas ; the Director-General of the Bibliotheque Nationale plays a very important part in the administration of French public libraries and the national library services of Botswana directly provides that country's public library services.

Most of the national libraries represented at the Vienna Symposium (1958) were old, some of them ancient, institutions which had evolved gradually with the history of their country. The exalted status they enjoyed as custodians of nation's cultural heritage itself posed problems to face the developing situations in the field of librarianship. To overcome this situation was partly the aim of the symposium. The self questioning by the national libraries of the Western World was discussed in a spirit of open mindedness and realised the dangers of erecting a rigid model. This, however, isolated certain essential functions which were being performed by the national libraries. "The real problem, then, is not to determine the status and structure of an ideal national library (which would never become a reality)

but to state quite clearly the tasks which every country should undertake both in its own interest and in order to retain its due place in the international network of cultural relations".

The Delhi Seminar on the Development of Public Libraries in Asia (1955) which was addressed by the Indian Education Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, had concluded that in certain situations, particularly when the local government is weak, and in smaller countries, there should not be a clear cut demarcation of functions of the national library and other libraries of the country.

The new national libraries set up in the third world as well as some old libraries of the region developed a mentality nurtured on the Anglo-saxon idea of a national library as being preeminently a custodian of higher learning and research and nothing else, "a Library of Libraries to be approached with reverence only when other kinds of libraries fail to satisfy the needs of the readers", and a "library of last resort".

The meetings held at Delhi (1955), Vienna (1958), Manila (1964), Quito (1966), and Colombo (1967) emphasised the national library's fundamental role as the premier library of the country. But the way in which it is exercised has varied from one country to another, understandably and necessarily, "owing to different degrees of political development, constitutional frameworks, geography and communications". The national libraries should always be "organically connected with a lively library network, giving it life and deriving life from it". They must never be an "apex without a base".

The most important function of a national library is to work as a permanent depository for the national literature. This hinges upon the effectiveness of the legal deposit. It is essential that legal deposit should be regulated by legislation without any ambiguity. It should lay down clear procedures for the deposit of materials and penalties against offenders. Unless the legislation is well drafted the national library's collection will have serious and yawning gaps. Consequently, the comprehensiveness and as a result the usefulness of the national bibliography based on the legal deposit will completely depend on the effectiveness of the relevant legislation.

The growth, need, importance, and effectiveness of the bibliographical and reference services of a national library is directly proportional to the weaknesses of reference services in the academic and public library network of the country.

Lending to other libraries and acting as the nerve centre for the inter-library loan system, both nationally and vis-a-vis foreign libraries are two of the important functions that have grown recently.

As Panafsky remarked the four sides of a national library should have sign boards proclaiming as a national library, a public library, an academic library and government archives.

It my be concluded that a library is called a national one when it is "the official depository of printed works ; a general access library ; an information, bibliographical centre ; and a centre of coordination, planning and stimulation of the entire library system of the nation". This definition appears to be least controversial and the National Library of India, Calcutta is living upto this image. A brief note on the National Library, Calcutta follows.

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SECTION TWO

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF INDIA : A BRIEF NOTE

The National Library, Calcutta, formerly known as the Imperial Library, Calcutta, is an institution recognised by the Government of India as a very special establishment devoted to the promotion of library services in the country. The constitution of India, 1950, in its Schedule Seven, List I, Section 62, specifically mentions that the institution known as the National Library, Calcutta, at the beginning of this constitution is an 'institution of national importance'. The old Viceregal lodge known as 'Belvedere' houses the main library, a nine storeyed Annexe completed in 1967 with an area of nearly 100,000 square feet, a two thousand square feet area in a single storeyed building, residential accommodation for more than one hundred members of staff, both senior and essential, and a Readers' Hostel. Bound volumes of newspapers are stacked and reading room facilities provided at Esplanade, which is about five kilometers from Belvedere. The Library has nearly two million documents comprising of books, bound volumes of periodicals, maps, manuscripts, Indian and Foreign official publications. The National Library, Calcutta, is a 'Recipient' Library under the Delivery of Books and Newspapers (Public Libraries) Act, 1954 as amended in 1956. The membership rules of the Library are so liberal that anyone who has attained the age of eighteen can utilise its services. The users of Library's Reading Rooms represent all segments of society. There are general readers, students—both under-graduate and post-graduate, research workers, professionals and reputed scholars. The Library is a subordinate institution under the Department of Culture, in the Government of India. The legend at the

entrance of the Library summarises the policies and services of the Library. The legend is as under :

> "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any."
>
> —Mahatma Gandhi

The history of the National Library broadly falls into three distinct periods. The first period is an eloquent tribute to the initiative of public men who, without any government assistance, started a library service for the people—The Calcutta Public Library. The next period is significant for the massive consolidating action taken by Lord Curzon in fusing the rich holdings of the then Imperial (Secretarial) Library with the Calcutta Public Library and forming the Imperial Library and for the first time in Asia was the scope of a National Library well and truly defined. The third period happily coincided with the period of growth in every department of culture and civilization consequent to the achievement of Independence by the country.

Stocqueler, the Editor of the *Englishman*, who first raised the idea of a public library in Calcutta, found popular support from the leading citizens of the city. After the preliminaries the Calcutta Public Library was opened to the public on 21 March 1836. As one of the objectives of the formation of the Library "is the dissemination of European literature and science in this country," transactions, journals and other publications issued by the learned societies abroad were acquired regularly. The Annual Report for the year 1850 mentions acquisition of books in some modern Indian languages as well as Pali and Ceylonese. Thanks to these efforts of the Calcutta Public Library, the National Library to-day serves some of the extremely rare books and journals to scholars. The Calcutta Public Library printed its catalogues regularly.

A number of Secretariate libraries were combined, in 1891, to form an Imperial [Secretariat] Library. One such library was that of the Home Department, which contained many books formerly belonging to the Fort William College and the library of the East India Board, London. The use of this collection was restricted for the senior officers of the Government.

Lord Curzon after visiting the Calcutta Public Library, which had fallen to a state of neglect, and the Imperial [Secretariat] Library, which had a

restricted clientele, formed a plan to consolidate by combining these two libraries. After all the arrangements for such an achievement was confirmed and validated by the Imperial Library (Indentures Validation) Act, 1902, the Imperial Library was declared opened to the public on 30 January 1903. It was intended that the Imperial Library should be a library of reference, a working place for students, and a repository of material for the future historians of India, in which, so far as possible, every work written about India at any time could be seen and read.

The Imperial Library :

The Imperial Library had the advantage of having Chapman and Asadullah as Librarians, for very long periods, from 1911-1930 and from 1930-1947 respectively, thus giving them adequate opportunity to plan oversee and execute many projects. Macfarlane, who was the first librarian of the Imperial Library, was from the British Museum and he arranged the holdings systematically and initiated the publication of catalogues. Harinath De who succeeded him worked for four years till 1911. Chapman initiated programmes for better services, organised the staff and trained them for responsible jobs and had the forethought for preservation work in the Library. He initiated research in conjunction with the Patna College and the Indian Institute of Science Bangalore. Arrangements were made to acquire publications emaning from federal government agencies and from native states. Nearly 11,000 such publications were acquired in the early period of the Imperial Library. He wrote the Annual Reports in great detail and made it a tool for staff guidance, by relating in great detail the work to be done and how it is to be done. He had thought of a union catalogue as a preliminary requisite for inter library loan system. Asadullah consolidated the work done by Chapman. He began the shelflisting of books in 1931, started library training in 1935. The trainees came from all parts of India. Thus a firm base was already there when, in the wake of Independence, the Imperial Library become the National Library. The vision of Stocqueler and discernment of Curzon and a successive series of good librarians had given India something it could call a National Library when it became an independent country. The Imperial Library (change of Name) Act was passed in 1948 and the National Library came into being.

The Viceregal Lodge, Belvedere, with its lovely grounds became the permanent home of the National Library. "I do not want Belvedere for the mere purpose of stacking books. We want to convert it into a fine Central Library where large number of research students can work and where there will be all the other amenities which a modern library gives", said Jawaharlal

Nehru at that time. The Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Library on 1 February 1953 happily coincided with the formal opening of the Library at its new site at Belvedere. Maulana Azad, the Union Minister of Education, who formally threw open the doors of Belvedere to the public said that "The National Library as the watershed of the Indian library world with a wide catchment area whose waters should irrigate the country into giving us rich harvest of knowledgeable men and women".

The successive Five Year Plans were taken advantage of to expand the services of the Library. Before Independence the Library could not achieve the national character which was essential to such an institution. Naturally enough, it was, in the early days, merely a repository of books on India, collected chiefly with an eye to the needs of administrators and Government departments.

The Belvedere campus, with an area of nearly thirty acres of land, gave enormous scope for spatial development. The Delivery of Books Act of 1954 and later amended in 1956, brought into the Library on the publications issued in India as well as newspapers and periodicals. This helped the Government of India to issue the Indian National Bibliography is an authoritative classified record of current Indian publications. Its first issue of the Bibliography comprising of books received in the National Library during the last quarter of the year 1957 was released on the 15th August 1958. The Librarian of the National Library had to oversee the planning, editing and publishing the Bibliography even though the work was entrusted to the Central Reference Library, another organisation under the same Ministry but functioning in the Belvedere campus. Till 1970 the Librarian of the National Library held the charge of that Office as well.

The Librarian was the General Editor of the National Bibliography of Indian Literature, brought out by the Sahitya Akademi, covering the period 1901-1953. A Bibliography of Indology project was undertaken and a few volumes have already been published. Ad-hoc bibliographies and literature surveys are regularly undertaken for scholars. A full team of bibliographers work under the guidance of two Assistant Librarians to cater to all these functions. The National Library's bibliographical units also handle effectively some of the International bibliographical assignments, such as Index Translationum, Bibliographical Services throughout the world etc.

The bibliographical thrust on a national library as envisaged in various definitions of the national library is well covered by the India's National Library.

A vast collection of books in a library such as the National Library has to be attended to very carefully against the dangers of climate and infestation. An important wing of the Library under the Reprography, Preservation and

Laboratory Divisions attend to this important work. Since no other library in the country has the facilities for fumigation, lamination and repair of books as the National Library, the Library undertakes training and assistance in these areas when requests from other libraries are received.

The Divisions with their sophisticated equipment and workmanship repairs worn out bindings, laminates books and by chemical means cleanses paper and board and takes care of preservation of leather bindings and handles specialised types of works. The bindery established within the library with fairly modern equipment, has gone some way towards preserving library material for future. Microfilming and photoreproduction and air conditioned storage of rare books is also part of preservation work.

Library functions as a part of the International Exchange Centre and has relations with nearly 150 institutions in 50 countries of the world.

International Lending services are handled in the National Library.

The printing of the catalogues of the library and printing of some important bibliographies is a regular feature.

Exhibition of books, manuscripts and other material are held in the Exhibition Hall of the main building at Belvedere regularly.

The Library being the premier libarary of the country plays an important role in its advisory capacity to the Government of India. The Library is represented on many important committees of the Government of India and other bodies. Since the "Libraries" are in the State List of the Constitution of India, which clearly states that "libraries controlled or financed by the state" are state subjects (Seventh Schedule List II Section 12), the National Library cannot have any direct role to play in the administration of libraries all over the country. However, the Library has offered advice to many institutions.

The bibliographical assistance to scholars, interlending of material from the National Library, printing of catatlogues and bibliographies, setting up a Reader's Hostel in the campus, have all extended the Library's services to a much larger clientele.

The Government of India appointed a Reviewing Committee, in 1968, to review the working of the National Library, Calcutta, and to suggest measures for its efficient functioning and future development. The recommendations of the committee have been, by and large, accepted by the Government of India, and the Library is following the guidelines as envisaged in its basic features of the National Library which are as follows :—

(i) Acquisition and conservation of all significant national production of printed material to the exclusion only of ephemera ;

(ii) Collection of printed material concerning the country, no matter where this is published, and, as a corollary, the acquisition of a photographic record of such material that is not available within the country ;

(iii) Acquisition and conservation of manuscripts of national importance ;

(iv) Planned acquisition of foreign material required by the country ;

(v) Rendering of bibliographical and documentation services of current and retrospective material, both general and specialised ;

(vi) Acting as a referral centre surveying full and accurate knowledge of all sources of bibliographical information and participation in international bibliographical activities ;

(vii) Provision of photo-copying and reprographic services, and

(viii) Acting as the centre for International Book Exchange and International Loan.

The manner in which the National Library, Calcutta has grown from its humble beginnings and the way the library services are planned, programmed and conducted, and the potential in the growth of space, staff and services all fits in adequately in the general description of a national library as detailed in Section one.

PUBLIC LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT in WEST BENGAL : A REVIEW

By

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1. BEGINNING OF ENGLISH EDUCATION AND GROWTH OF LIBRARIES.

1.1. Early English education and growth of libraries :

This history of library development in modern Bengal is closely linked with the settlement of Englishmen in this part of the country. Since its foundation in 1690, Calcutta became one of the principal English settlements in India. After the victory at Plassey in 1757, Calcutta became the major centre of English expansion in India. It is from the *Bengal Gazette* or Hicky's Gazette as it is popularly known and subsequently from the *Calcutta Gazette* that we learn that there were a few circulation and subscription libraries meant for English settlers in Bengal. We learn from the Hicky's Gazette that one Mr. John Andrews was then running a Circulating Library in the Old Fort. It is told that as early as 1770 the Fort had a public library kept by one Mr. Johns. The Circulating Library of John Andrews was shifted to a "cool and commodious" place in 1781. We also come to know about the Circulating Library of Mr. Shakell and the Circulating Library kept by Messers Macdonald and Arnott. In 1787, these libraries were purchased by one Messers Cock, Maxwell & Co. and a big general library was started under the name "Calcutta Circulating Library". This Library continued upto 1792, after which its collection was put up for public sale. The library of the *Bengal Hurkaru*, which came into existence in 1798 was also rich in collection.

The Protestant missionaries who came to Bengal in the Eighteenth century also developed libraries for their own use.

1.2. Establishment of Asiatic Society Library : Beginning of Library Movement in Bengal.

Library development was initiated in undivided Bengal in the second half of the eighteenth century. The establishment of the Asiatic Society and its Library in 1784 at Calcutta to promote studies and research on such subjects as history, archaeology, science, art and culture, language, religion, philosophy, etc. related to Asia was the beginning of modern library movement in undivided Bengal. The Society and its library was first located at the Office of Sir William Jones, the great Indologist and founder of the Society. It was ultimately shifted to the present location of the Society at the Park Street, Calcutta. The Asiatic Society Library possesses the richest collection of Asiatic and Indological studies in India. Prior to 1830, Indians were debarred from the membership of this Society and the Library attached to it. The eminent linguist Ramkamal Sen and Indologist Rajendralal Mitra were Librarians of the Society's Library. In the bi-centenary year of the Society (1984) the Govt. of India has declared it an institution of national importance.

1.3. Fort William College Library :

Though the Fort William College was established in 1800 AD to help the English civilians to learn Indian languages, its library was open to the citizens of Calcutta. This library had a good collection of books and manuscripts of Indology. Mr. William Hunter was the first Librarian of the Fort William College. After a few years he got an Assistant named Mohanprasad Thakur who was also the compiler of some dictionaries. After the dissolution of the College in 1830, its rich collection was acquired by the libraries of London, Library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Calcutta Public Library which was established in 1836.

1.4. Academic Libraries :

The imperialist rulers of undivided India did not want the spread of education for obvious reasons. They were interested in the creation of a limited number of English educated people who would serve their imperialist interests in India. However with the introduction of English education, the newly educated middle class was exposed to the western civilization and the development of knowledge in the western world. They took up the lead to establish different educational institutions for spreading education. In the first half of the nineteenth century the following educational institutions were established in undivided Bengal : Hindu College (now known as Presidency College), (1817), Serampore College (1818), Oriental Seminary (1823), General Assembly (now known as Scottish Church

College) (1830), St. Xavier's College (1835), Hooghly Mohasin College (1836). Gradually libraries were also developed in these institutions. Calcutta Madarsah established in 1781 for the cultivation of Arabic and Persian studies and the Sanskrit College established in 1823 for Sanskrit and Indological studies played very important roles in the promotion of Oriental learning. Gradually specialized academic libraries were developed in these institutions. The Calcutta School Book Society which was established in 1821 developed a library since its foundation. The University of Calcutta which was established in 1857 developed its library within a few years.

1.5. Specialized Libraries :

Along with the development of libraries attached to general educational institutions, following libraries with specialized collections were also established in the Eighteenth and nineteenth centuries : Botanical Garden Library, Shibpur, Howrah (1787), Calcutta Medical College Library (1835), Geological Survey of India Library (1851), Bengal Engineering College Library (1856) and the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science Library (1876).

2. TOWARDS PUBLIC LIBRARY MOVEMENT :

2.1. Calcutta Library Society :

The Calcutta Library Society was established around 1818 to provide a library to the citizen of Calcutta that could be used on payment of a fixed rate of subscription. The "Proprietors" of the Library were Englishmen. By 1830, the Library developed a good collection of 2700 volumes. Though the library had little contact with the Indian community, it continued to function at least for about fifteen years.

2.2. Calcutta Public Library : Beginning of Public Library Movement in Bengal.

In the third decade of the nineteenth century, necessity was felt for establishment of a Public Library under the joint effort of the European and Indian community. The first attempt to establish a Public Library for both Indian and European communities was made in 1835. Eminent and distinguished personalities of the then Calcutta met in a public meeting on 20th August, 1835. The meeting took place "to take into consideration the best mode of testifying the public satisfactions" at the emancipation of the press under Sir Charles Metcalfe. The meeting also adopted the following resolution :

"That it is expedient and necessary to establish in Calcutta a Public Library of reference and circulation that shall be opened to all ranks and

classes without distinction and sufficiently extensive to supply the wants of the entire community in every department of literature".

As a result of this effort the Calcutta Public Library came into existence on 21st March, 1836.

The Calcutta Public Library was opened to the public on the ground floor of the residence of Dr. F. P. Strong, Civil Surgeon of the 24 Parganas. After a temporary shift to Fort William in July 1841, the Library was finally removed to the first floor of Metcalfe Hall on the Strand Road.

"Many eminent citizens of Calcutta—both Indians and Europeans joined the Library either as proprietors or as subscribers during its long and eventful career. Among the Indian patrons, mention may be made of Dwarakanath Tagore, Debendranath Tagore, Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Ram Gopal Ghosh, Rustomjee Cowasjee, Raja Satya Chandra Ghoshal, Nrityalal Sil, Pratap Chandra Singh, Radhanath Sikdar, Peary Chand Mitra, Rasamay Datta, Rasik Krishna Mallik, Sashi Chandra Datta, Kishori Chand Mitra, Smbhunath Pandit and Dr. Mohendralal Sarkar. These are well-known names to students of nineteenth century Bengal. Of the European patrons, the following names deserve particular mention : T. B. Macaulay, J. C. Marshman, Lord Metcalfe, James Princep, Sir John Peter Grant, J. F. D. Bethune and H. Beveridge". (B. S. Kesavan—India's National Library, p. 4).

The nucleus of the Library was formed by donations from private individuals, and by the transfer from the library of the Fort William College of a valuable collection consisting of 4,675 volumes.

Though the initiative to establish this Library was taken up by both European and Indian communities, the man behind the establishment of this library was Mr. J. H. Siddons, the ex-Editor of the Englishman who found the city of Calcutta "destitute of a Public Library". Peary Chand Mitra and Bipin Chandra Pal, two eminent sons of Bengal were Librarians of this Library. It is stated that the European Community of the then Calcutta lost their interest about his Library after the mutiny of eighteen fifty seven and the condition of this Library deteriorated by the end of the nineteenth century. Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy of India, purchased its collection and merged it with the *Imperial Library* founded by him in 1903. Mr. John Macfarlane of the British Museum was appointed as its first Librarian. The Imperial Library was first located at the Metcalfe Hall and then shifted to the Esplanade East. The *Imperial Library* was ultimately transformed into the *National Library of India* after independence and was shifted from its earlier location at Esplanade East to Belvedere, Alipur, though the Newspaper Reading Room of the Library is still there.

2.3. Growth of Public Libraries :

The establishment of the Calcutta Public Library in 1836 and the enactment of first Public Library law in the world in United Kingdom in the year 1850 had an effect among the enlightened people of the nineteenth century. As a result, under their leadership quite a good number of public libraries were established in different districts of undivided Bengal by the end of the nineteenth century. Some of the public libraries established in the nineteenth century in this part of Bengal (West Bengal) are : (1) Rajnarayan Basu Smriti Pathagar (Midnapur)—established in 1851. Its earlier name was *Bayley Hall Library*. Now it is a Govt.-sponsored Town Library, (2) Hooghly Public Library—established in 1854, (3) Krishnanagar Public Library (Nadia District)—established in 1856. Presently it is a Government-sponsored Town Library, (4) Konnagar Public Library (Hooghly District)—established in 1858. It is also a Government-sponsored Town Library now, (5) Uttarpara Public Library (Hooghly District)—established in 1859. It is now a Govt. Library and re-named as "Uttarpara Joykrishna Public Library", (6) Bandhab Library at Jaynagar-Majilpur (South 24 Parganas District)—established in 1869. It is now a Govt.-sponsored Town Library, (7) Ariadaha Association Library (North 24 Parganas)—established in 1870. Now it is a Govt.-sponsored Town Library, (8) Serampore Public Library (Hooghly District)—established in 1871. This Library is now a Govt.-sponsored Town Library, (9) The Barasat Association Library (North 24 Parganas District)—established in 1871, (10) Boral Priyanath Library (South 24 Parganas District)—established in 1871, (11) United Reading Room (near Chitpur Road and Beadon Street in Calcutta)—established in 1872, (12) Ambica Sadharan Pathagar (Ambica-Kalna, Burdwan District)—established in 1872, (13) Chandannagar Pustakagar (Hooghly District)—established in 1873. It is now a Govt.-sponsored Town Library, (14) Shibpur Public Library (Howrah District)—established in 1874, (15) Sashipada Institute (Cossipur, Calcutta)—established in 1876, (16) Baranagar Peoples' Library (North 24 Parganas District)—established in 1876, (17) Indian Association Library (Calcutta)—established in 1876, (18) Mudialy Public Library (Garden Reach, Calcutta)—established in 1876. It is a Govt.-sponsored Town Library now, (19) Rajpur Public Library (South 24 Parganas District)—established in 1877. It is a Govt.-sponsored Town Library at present, (20) Sadharan Brahmo Samaj Library (Calcutta)—established in 1879, (21) Dakshineswar Ramakrishna Library and Reading Club (South 24 Prganas District)—established in 1879, (22) Taltala Public Library (Calcutta)—established in 1882, (23) Bagbazar Reading Library (Calcutta)—established in 1883. It is a Govt.-sponsored Town Library now, (24) Rashpur Peoples' Library (Howrah District)—established in 1883. It is a Govt.-sponsored Rural Library,

(25) Pragati Pathagar (Ghatal-Midnapur District)—established in 1883, (26) Bantra Public Library (Howrah District)—established in 1884, (27) Ranaghat Public Library (Nadia District)—established in 1884, (28) Kumartuli Institute Library (Calcutta)—established in 1884, (29) Bally Public Library (Howrah District)—established in 1885. It is now a Govt.-sponsored Town Library, (30) Andul-Mohiary Public Library (Howrah District)—established in 1886. It is a Govt.-sponsored Town Library at present, (31) Mug-Kalyan Pally Bharati Granthagar (Howrah District)—established in 1888. It is a Govt.-sponsored Rural Library now, (32) Subarban Reading Club (Calcutta) —established in 1888, (33) Chaitanya Library (Calcutta)—established in 1889, (34) Sporting Club Library (Howrah)—established in 1889, (35) Kalighat Library & Free Reading Room (Calcutta)—established in 1889, (36) Bharati Parishad Library (Calcutta)—established in 1890, (37) Bansberia Public Library (Hooghly)—established in 1891. It is a Govt.-sponsored Town Library, (38) Agarpara Pathagar (North 24 Parganas)—established in 1891. Now it is a Govt.-sponsored Town Library, (39) University Institute Library (Calcutta)—established in 1891, (40) Suhrid Library (Calcutta)—established in 1891, (41) Mahabodhi Society Library (Calcutta)—established in 1892, (42) Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Library (Calcutta)—established in 1893. (43) Sripur Kalyan Samity Library (Hooghly District)—established in 1894. It is a Govt.-sponsored Town Library now, (44) Jamgram Nandi Sadharan Pathagar (Hooghly)—It is a Govt.-sponsored Rural Library, (45) Moudlai Public Library (Hooghly)—established in 1894. At present it is a Govt.-sponsored Rural Library, (46) Belur Public Library (Howrah)—established in 1895, (47) Y. M. C. A. Library (Calcutta)—established in 1895, (48) Baniapukur Library & Reading Club (Calcutta)—established in 1897, (49) Ramakrishna Mission Library (Saragachi, Murshidabad)—established in 1897. It is a Govt.-sponsored Rural Library, (50) Saraswati Institute (Calcutta)—established in 1898, (51) Friends' Union Library (Howrah District)—established in 1898, (52) Kamala Library (Baruipur, South 24 Parganas)—established in 1898, (53) Kakatia Public Library—established in 1899.

These libraries were established by a group of devoted people, who believed that public libraries can play a vital role in the upliftment of educational and cultural level of the people. In the other part of Bengal (at present Bangladesh) also a large number of public libraries were established in the nineteenth century. Luminiaries of the nineteenth century Bengal were associated with these libraries. Though the services of these libraries were confined to a section of the educated middle and upper classes, still these libraries played an important role in the development of our national consciousness. It is interesting to note that some of disciples of Derozio played an important role in establishing these libraries.

2.4. Public Libraries and Freedom movement :

At the beginning of the twentieth century the library movement in Bengal got special impetus from the freedom movement of our country. Hundreds of libraries were established in villages and towns, mainly at the initiative of groups of young people. They organized, these libraries with patriotic zeal. Many proscribed and revolutionary books were kept in these libraries which were secretly circulated among the young people. The then imperialist power in India was not at all interested in the spread of mass education. On the other hand, they were afraid of the spread of political consciousness or discontent among the people through these libraries. Naturally, they were not happy with the growth of these libraries. So, instead of receiving Government assistance, many of these public libraries became victims of harassment. Many of these public libraries were frequently raided by the police force of the imperialist power, their organisers were arrested and the books and other reading materials which were taken away by the police were never returned. These libraries were then managed by raising donations, both money and books, from the common people.

2.5. Establishment of the Bengal Library Association : Beginning of organised Library movement in Bengal.

This was the socio-political background when the All Bengal Library Association was formed in a meeting held on 20th December, 1925 at the Albert Hall, Calcutta, under the presidentship of J. A. Chapman, the then Librarian of the Imperial Library. Poet Rabindranath Tagore was the first President of the Association. The Association was established to organise and to co-ordinate the library movement in Bengal in a planned manner. Tagore's writings about the aims and functions of libraries are always inspiring guidelines to the people connected with the library movement in Bengal. Since its foundation the Association has been playing a vital role in promoting library movement and library awareness among the people.

3. PUBLIC LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN WEST BENGAL AFTER INDEPENDENCE : FIRST THIRTY YEARS (1947-1977)

At the time of independence there were nearly 5000 public libraries managed by the common people, in different districts of West Bengal. After independence the State Govt. took some programme for development of public libraries from the second plan period onwards. As a result, following 762 Govt.-controlled and sponsored public libraries were established until 1977, when the Left-Front came to power in West Bengal : (a) 1 State Central

Library, (b) 20 District Libraries, (c) 37 Subdivisional/Town Libraries, (d) 701 Rural/Area Libraries, and (e) 3 more Central Libraries. Though this step for library development was a departure from the preceeding period under British rule, it had the following defects and lacunae :

3.1. Library Legislation Ignored :

The long-felt demand for library legislation for co-ordination, integration and planned development of public library services in this State was not given due consideration. During this period four States of India, namely, Tamilnadu, Andhrapradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra had enacted Public Library Laws. Though the undivided Bengal was a pioneer state in Library movement in India, its demand for enactment of Public Library Law was turned down again and again.

3.2. Scanty and Unplanned Development :

Existing public-managed libraries were converted into Govt.-sponsored public libraries in an unplanned and haphazard manner. For example, there were at that time 335 blocks in the State, out of which some had 1 or 2 Govt.-sponsored libraries, and quite a good number of blocks had no Govt.-sponsored libraries at all. 63 municipal towns and some town-like areas were not covered by Govt.-sponsored town/subdivisional library system. A district library was established in a village. Large number of villages having population of 5000 or more were not covered by Govt.-sponsored Rural/Area Library system. Govt.-sponsored libraries were created haphazardly by political pressure and individual influence, not considering the need and existing conditions of library services in the locality.

3.3. Meagre grants for Library Services :

Govt.-controlled and sponsored public libraries at that time were severely affected by financial crisis. By the end of 1976 the State Govt. used to spend approximately seven million rupees annually (60 lakhs) for development and maintenance of public libraries. A very small part of this amount was spent for purchase of documents. For example, Rural/Area Libraries, numbering 701, received no grant for purchase of books. They had grant for staff salaries and annual grant of Rs. 600/- for contingency expenditure. Town/Sub-Divisional and District Libraries had meagre grant of Rs. 1800/- and Rs. 3000/- respectively for purchase of books every year. There were no grants for purchase of periodicals, furniture and for preservation of library materials to any of these libraries.

3.4. Distressing conditions of Library employees :

Salary and service conditions of library staff were extremely distressing. When the scheme was introduced in the year 1956 all of them were on consolidated pay having no scales of pay and allowances, A fulltime Rural Librarian used to get a consolidated pay of Rs. 75/- per month and a fulltime District Librarian used to get a consolidated pay of Rs. 250/- per month. Later on some very poor scales of pay were introduced for them. There were no retirement benefits and no service rules for them. Library staff were given Dearness Allowance at a lower rate than those given to Govt. employees. They were debarred from House Rent Allowance, Medical Allowance, Hill Allowance and other economic benefits. As a result they were victims of frustration.

3.5. No integrated Library service :

Libraries were functioning in a disjointed manner, having no integration and co-ordination among them. It is now a well established fact that for rendering effective library services, co-ordination and integration of libraries through a network is an essential condition.

3.6. Biased Book Selection :

Some of the reading materials, occasionally supplied by the State Govt., reflected bias. Sometimes even multiple copies of a document not likely to be used by the users of a particular type of library were supplied. Libraries had little freedom to choose their titles.

3.7. Non-Govt. Libraries Ignored :

There were many non-sponsored public libraries at that time, rendering valuable services to the people. As the development of Govt.-sponsored public libraries were uneven and not in all parts of the State, it was expected that these libraries would receive some sort of assistance from the government for maintenance of services. But their expectations were not fulfilled. Only a few of these libraries used to receive very meagre amount of assistance at an interval of years.

3.8. Library Movement Ignored :

In all phases of library development, views and opinions of persons and organisations connected with library movement were not given due consideration. There was an indifferent attitude on the part of the State Govt. towards the library movement of this State.

3.9. No Proper Library Policy :

Lastly, there was lack of understanding about the perspective of library movement. That libraries in a developing country like India can play a vital role in the eradication of illiteracy, superstitions and parochial outlooks, in the programmes for uplift of social, economic and cultural level of the community, in the preservation of democracy and democratic ideals, and in dissemination of information for life and living of the people, were never conceived and understood by political leaders, administrators and planners at that time. As a result, few libraries were developed as show pieces, but not as functional social institutions for common people. Many of these libraries were pressurized to procure cheap novelettes and crime fiction to cater to the need of a section of middle class people. Compulsory free primary education, adult education and public library services are all very important components of mass education. But all these programmes were severely neglected during this period.

4. PUBLIC LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT—SINCE 1977

The Left Front in West Bengal took a different attitude towards library development when they came into power in 1977. Important developments in the field of public library services since 1977 are as follows :

4.1. New Library Policy :

In developing library services a new outlook was developed. Instead of considering the libraries as mere recrtational centres, these were conceived as vital social institutions for mass education. That the public libraries can play vital roles in the eradication of illiteracy and retention of newly acquired literacy, in the development of social and democratic ideals and values, in nourishment of healthy cultural outlook against decadence and degeneration, in the struggle against obscurantism and in the provision of information for socio-economic development of the country were conceived by persons connected with library development work during this period.

4.2. West Bengal Public Libraries Act :

(a) When the Left Front fought the West Bengal Legislative Assembly election in 1977, they assured in their election manifesto that a public library system will be developed through library legislation. This is for the first time not only in the history of West Bengal but may be in the entire Indo-Pak sub-continent, that library development was made an issue in a political battle like election.

(b) After assuming power, the Left Front Govt. constituted an expert committee to draft a Public Library Bill for enactment. This committee was constituted of persons who were connected with library movement for many years. A draft bill was prepared and after certain modifications it was

enacted in 1979. West Bengal became the fifth State in India to have the library law. This Act was further amended in 1982 and 1985. Chief features of this Act are : Constituting the State Library Council with Minister-In-Charge of Library Services as Chairman and the Local Library Authority at the district level with District Magistrate as Chairman ; A separate Directorate for Library Services with Director of Library Services as top Officer and District Library Officers and their offices at the district level ; Democratization of the management of library services by representation from the Bengal Library Association, library employees, library experts, local governments (Zilla Parishad, Panchayat Samity, Municipality/Corporation), Members of the Legislative assembly, educationists and govt. officials in the State Library Council and the Local Library Authority ; Bringing different govt. controlled and sponsored public libraries and their employees within the purview of this Act so that an integrated public library system can be developed under the supervision and control of the Director of Library Services, the District Library Officer, the State Library Council and the Local Library Authorities.

4.3. Increased Budget Allocation for Library Services :

Considering the acute financial difficulties faced by the libraries, the State Govt. decided to enhance the budget allocations for improvement, expansion and maintenance of public library services. Accordingly, the following amount of money were allocated by the Left Front Govt. during the last five financial years :

1979-80 :	Rs.	2,26,46,000.00
1980-81 :	Rs.	4,01,00,000.00
1981-82 :	Rs.	4,28,40,000.00
1982-83 :	Rs.	4,66,39,000.00
1983-84 :	Rs.	5,00,26,000.00
1984-85 :	Rs.	5,50,00,000.00
1985-86 :	Rs.	7,50,00,000.00

The expenditure on public library services being the highest in any of the states in India.

4.4. New Libraries in Rural and Urban Areas :

Along with increased budget allocation, programmes were taken up for development of libraries in rural and urban areas of West Bengal. In contrast to the establishment of 762 Govt.-controlled and sponsored public libraries in West Bengal during first thirty years after independence (i.e., 1947-1977), programmes were taken by the Left Front Government to create 1659 Government-controlled and sponsored public libraries of the following types :

1 Calcutta Metropolitan Library, 83 town libraries and 1575 rural and

primary unit libraries. Growth of Govt.-controlled and sponsored public libraries during post-independence days are shown by following tables :—

(1) Table showing growth of govt.-controlled and sponsored public libraries before and during Left Front period in different districts :—

	Libraries established during the years : 1947-1977 (30 years)						Libraries established during the years : 1977-1986 (9 years)				
	SCL	DL	CL	TL	RL	Total	DL	TL	RL	Total	Grand total
Bankura	—	1	—	1	38	40	—	2	83	85	125
Birbhum	—	1	—	1	42	44	—	4	70	74	118
Burdwan	—	2	—	4	55	61	—	2	139	141	202
Calcutta	1	—	—	1	5	7	1	3	108	112	119
Cooch Behar	—	1	—	1	39	41	—	3	65	68	109
Darjeeling	—	1	1	3	60	65	—	2	57	59	124
Hooghly	—	2	—	4	53	59	—	9	87	96	155
Howrah	—	1	—	1	52	54	—	3	81	84	138
Jalpaiguri	—	1	—	1	34	36	—	2	68	70	106
Malda	—	1	—	2	27	30	—	2	69	71	101
Midnapur	—	2	—	5	67	74	—	6	190	196	270
Murshidabad	—	1	—	2	38	41	—	6	110	116	157
Nadia	—	1	—	3	36	40	—	4	72	76	116
Purulia	—	1	—	1	38	40	—	2	71	73	113
24-Parganas	—	3	2	6	82	93	—	31	235	266	359
West Dinajpur	—	1	—	1	35	37	—	2	70	72	109
Total	1	20	3	37	701	762	1	83	1575	1659	2421

N.B. (A) SCL—State Central Library ; DL—District Library ; CL—Central Library (Town Library Status) ; TL—Town Library which also includes Sub-Divisional Library ; RL—Rural Library which also includes Area Library and Primary Unit Library, as they are of equal status.

(B) In 1985-86 and 1986-87 financial years, the State Govt. also approved the creation of following more libraries : (i) One additional District Library at Siliguri (Darjeeling District ; (ii) One City Central Library at Durgapur (Burdwan District) ; (iii) Establishment of 100 (one hundred) more Rural/Primary Unit Libraries in different districts ; (iv) Upgradation of 114 Rural/Primary Unit Libraries into Govt.-sponsored Town Library status on fulfilment of certain conditions.

(2) Table showing different types of libraries in districts :—

Type of Library	Bankura	Birbhum	Burdwan	Calcutta	Cooch Behar	Darjeeling	Hooghly	Howrah	Jalpaiguri	Malda	Midnapur	Murshidabad	Nadia	Purulia	24-Parganas	West Dinajpur	Total
State Central Library	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
District Library	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	21
Central Library	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	3
Town/ Sub-divisional Library	3	5	6	4	4	5	13	4	3	4	11	8	7	3	37	3	120
Rural/Area/ Primary Unit Library	121	112	194	113	104	117	140	133	102	96	257	148	108	109	317	105	2276
Total	125	118	202	119	109	124	155	138	106	101	270	157	116	113	359	109	2421

N.B.—(A) Town Library and Sub-divisional library are of equal status in all respect. Town Libraries situated at sub-divisional head quarters are known as Sub-divisional Libraries. Town Libraries are situated in municipal towns.

(B) Rural/Area/Primary Unit Libraries are of equal status in all respect. Rural Libraries are situated in rural areas. Area Libraries were established during Second Plan period to serve an integrated area. But in reality, functioning of area libraries are same as rural and primary unit libraries. Primary Unit Libraries are those which are located in different wards of big towns and cities. Maintenance grants, number of staff and staff salary, management rules, etc., for these libraries (Rural/Area/Primary Unit Libraries) are same. So, they are of equal status.

(C) Central Libraries were established during the second plan period to serve an integrated educational complex area. Status of these libraries are now same as town libraries. These Central Libraries are located at Banipur (Govt.), Kalimpong (Govt.) and Narendrapur (Govt.-sponsored).

(D) District Libraries are located at district head quarters. Following districts have more than one district library considering the area and population of the district, as well as, importance of particular library :—24 Parganas (Rahara, Vidyanagar, Taki), Midnapore (Midnapore, Tamluk), Burdwan (Burdwan, Asansol), Hooghly (Chinsurah-Hooghly, Uttarpara).

(E) Two more Govt. libraries have been established during the financial year 1985-86. These are located at Siliguri (Additional District Library), Durgapur (City Central Library).

(F) Out of these 2421 Govt.-controlled and sponsored public libraries, following are directly Govt.-controlled and rest are Gov.-sponsored :—

(i) State Central Library (at Calcutta)

(ii) Calcutta Metropolitan Library (District Library status)

(iii) Deshbandhu District Library (at Darjeeling)

(iv) Uttarpara Joykrishna Public Library (District Library status)

(v) Taki Govt. District Library (District Library status)

(vi) Institute De Chandernagar (Town Library status)

(vii) Digha Govt. Library (Town Library status)

(viii) Central Library, Kalimpong (Town Library status)

(ix) Central Library, Banipur (Town Library status)

(3) *Guidelines followed* :—

The following guidelines were adopted in establishing new Govt.-sponsored public libraries in different districts :

(i) Population and the number of existing Govt. and Govt.-sponsored libraries in districts were taken into consideration while allocating new quotas for public libraries in different districts.

(ii) Priorities were given for conversion of existing public-managed libraries into Govt.-sponsored public libraries. Where no such libraries existed steps were taken to establish new libraries in view of the demands.

(iii) Priorities were also given to cover villages having more than 5000 population, which were not yet covered by the Govt.-controlled or Govt.-sponsored Public library system.

(iv) Municipal towns not yet covered by the Govt.-controlled or sponsored Public library system were covered by town libraries and towns having more than 1 lakh population were covered by Primary unit libraries in addition to Town libraries.

(v) Conversion or creation of sponsored libraries were done through actual inspection of library spot by a team and also after considering the views of Panchayats, Panchayat samitis, Zilla parishads, Municipalities and thus involving a larger section of the people in library development work.

(vi) A policy was taken up to establish atleast 2-3 libraries in each and every block scattered in rural areas.

(vii) The entire scheme of public library development was prepared in accordance with the recommendations of workshop-cum-seminar convened by the State Govt. for this purpose (28th—29th July, 1979) and thus involving large number of people in library development programme.

4.5. Enhanced Maintenance Grants for Libraries:

(a) The next step that the Left Front Govt. took up was to enhance the maintenance grants to government-conrolled and sponsored libraries. Besides increasing grants for purchase of books, new grants were introduced for purchase of periodicals, furniture, and for binding and preservation. The following table will show the earlier position of maintenance grants in comparison to present position.

TABLE SHOWING RATE OF ANNUAL GRANTS (IN RUPEES)

(a) indicates pre-1977 period ; (b) indicates present position

Items of grant	State Central Library (1)	Uttarpara J. K. Library (1)	District Libraries (20)	Sub-Divisional/ Town Libraries (120)	Rural/Area/Primary Unit Libraries (2276)
BOOKS & PERIODICALS					
(a) Pre—1977	(a) 50000	(a) 25000	(a) 3000	(a) 1800	(a) No grant
(b) At present	(b) 105000	(b) 37000	(b) 32000	(b) 9000	(b) 3000
FURNITURE					
(a) Pre—1977	(a) No grant	(a) No grant	(a) No grant	(a) No grant	(a) No grant
(b) At present	(b) 10000	(b) 3000	(b) 2000	(b) 1000	(b) 500
BINDING & PRESERVATION					
(a) Pre—1977	(a) No grant	(a) No grant	(a) No grant	(a) No grant	(a) No grant
(b) At present	(b) 15000	(b) 10000	(b) 3000	(b) 1000	(b) 500
CONTINGENCY					
(a) Pre—1977	(a) 31000	(a) 11000	(a) 2000	(a) 1200	(a) 600
(b) At present	(b) 35000	(b) 11000	(b) 8000	(b) 2500	(b) 1000
MOBILE VAN					
(a) Pre—1977	(a) 42000	—	(a) No grant	—	—
(b) At present	(b) 42000	—	(b) 15000	—	—
TOTAL GRANT FOR EACH LIBRARY					
(a) Pre—1977	(a) 123000	(a) 36000	(a) 5000	(a) 3000	(a) 600
(b) At present	(b) 207000	(b) 61000	(b) 60000	(b) 13500	(b) 5000

N.B.—(a) Three more Govt. libraries get grants at the rate of Town/Sub-divisional Libraries. (b) Newly established Calcutta Metropolitan Library gets grant on an ad hoc basis.

TABLE SHOWING A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TOTAL MAINTENANCE GRANTS

It will be interesting here to make a comparative study of total maintenance grants (excluding salary and allowances) under different heads in pre-1977 and post-1977 periods :

Items of grant (annual)	Pre 1977 (Total amount spent annually for 762 Govt.-controlled and sponsored libraries) (in Rs.)	Post 1977 (Total amount spent annually for 2420 Govt.-controlled and sponsored libraries*) (in Rs.)
Recurring grant for purchase of books and periodicals	2 lakh 4 thousand (No periodical grant)	86 lakh 85 thousand 4 hundred**
Recurring grant for purchase of furniture	No Grant for any library	13 lakh 12 thousand
Recurring grant for Binding and preservation	No Grant for any library	13 lakh 43 thousand
Recurring grant for contingency expenditure	5 lakh 48 thousand 6 hundred	27 lakh 81 thousand 5 hundred
Recurring grant for mobile van	42 thousand (only the State Central Library)	3 lakh 27 thousand (for the State Central Library and for 19 District libraries)
Total recurring grants for maintenance	7 lakh 94 thousand 6 hundred	1 crore 44 lakh 48 thousand 9 hundred

N.B. *1. Newly established Calcutta Metropolitan Library was excluded as it receives grant on ad hoc basis at present.

**2. Besides annual grant of Rupees 86 lakh 85 thousand 4 hundred for purchase of books to Govt.-controlled and sponsored libraries, the State Govt. also spends annually another amount of Rupees 10—15 lakhs for purchase of books from the State Book Fair, for purchase of books under matching grant scheme of the Raja Rommohan Roy Library Foundation and also grants to non-sponsored libraries for purchase of books.

(b) Besides these annual grants, the Left Front Govt. also sanctioned following ad hoc grants to public libraries :

(i) Ad hoc grant of Rs. 40 lakh 52 thousand in the International Childen's Year for establishment of children section in 759 old public libraries.

(ii) Ad hoc grant of Rs. 35 lakh building grant during the years 1978-79 to 1981-82 to some old public libraries and also to libraries affected by flood.

4.6. Grants for Non-Govt. Libraries :

Special grants to non-govt., non-sponsored public libraries for purchase of books :—

1978-79	...	7 lakh 89 thousand 7 hundred
1979-80	...	10 lakh
1980-81	...	10 lakh
1983-84	...	5 lakh
1985-86	...	5 lakh
1986-87	...	6 lakh

4.7. Directorate of Library Services, State Library Council and Local Library Authorities :

Along with the programme for development of public libraries and increased budgetary allocation for their maintenance, the Left Front Govt. took following steps in fulfilment of the objectives and directions of the West Bengal Public Libraries Act, 1979, as amended in 1982 and 1985.

(i) Created a separate Directorate of Library Services under a Director to guide, control and supervise the functioning of the libraries.

(ii) Constituted the State Library Council to function as apex advisory body in all matters relating to libraries and library services in this state. This body has been constituted with the following categories of members : Minister-in-Charge of Library Services (Chairman), Director of Library Services (Ex-officio Member-Secretary), Educationists (4), Legislators (4), Experts in Library Science and service (4), Other govt. officials (5), Representatives

of the Bengal Library Association (2), Representative of the employees of the system (2), Representatives of the Local Library Authorities (2), District Librarian (1), Librarian of the State Central Library (1), Librarian of the National Library (1), District Library Officer (1).

(iii) Constituted Local Library Authorities in each and every district of the state to function as corporate body with legal powers to plan, coordinate and supervise public library services in the concerned district. These bodies have been constituted with the following categories of members: The District Magistrate (Chairman; in case of Calcutta the Director of Library Services), the District Library Officer (Ex-officio Member-Secretary), Representatives of the local govts. (Zilla Parishad, Panchayat Samity, Municipalities/Corporations) (5), Educationists (3), Legislators (2), Members of the Managing Committtees of Public Libraries (2), Representatives of the Bengal Library Association (2), Representatives of the associations of the employees of different public libraries (2), District Social Education Officer (1), District Librarian (1/2/3 as the case may be depending on the number of District Libraries in the district).

(iv) Prepared different rules for proper functioning of the State Library Council and the Local Library Authorities.

4.8. Public Library Management Rules:

The state govt. has also prepared and implemented, a set of rules, known as 'Public Library Management Rules', to administer the Govt.-sponsored public libraries in a democratic manner. In these rules democratic participation of members as well as supervision by the Local Library Authority and the Directorate of Library Services has been ensured.

4.9. Staff Pattern in Public Libraries :

The present staff pattern of Govt.-controlled and sponsored public libraries in West Bengal are as follows :—

No. of posts in each library	SCL	UPL	CML	DL	CL	TL/SL	RL/AL /PUL
Librarian	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asst. Librarian	4	2	4	—	1	—	—
Technical Asst.	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Library Asst.	8	3	6	2	—	1	—
Library Attendant	2	—	—	2	1	—	—
Head Clerk	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Upper Division Clerk	1	—	1	—	—	—	—
Lower Division Clerk	1	—	1	—	—	—	—
Typist	1	—	1	—	—	—	—
Accountant	1	—	1	—	—	—	—
Cashier	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Projectionist	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Driver	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Cleaner	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Durwan/Night Guard	4	2	2	2	—	1	—
Peon/Cycle Peon/ Duftry cum Binder/ Farash	6	4	1	1	1	1	1
Mali	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
Sweeper	2	1	1	—	—	—	—
Total	36	15	19	10	4	4	2

N. B. (1) SCL—State Central Library ; UPL—Uttarpara Public Library ; CML—Calcutta Metropolitan Library ; DL—District Library ; CL—Central Library ; TL—Town Library ; SL—Sub-Divisional Library ; RL—Rural Library ; AL—Area Library ; PUL—Primary Unit Library.

(2) There are following variations : Taki Govt. District Library & West Dinajpur District Library—1 Asst. Librarian & 1 Library Asst. (instead of 2 Library Asst. as in other District Libaries).

(3) Additional posts in following libraries—Taki Govt. District Library (1 Mali) ; North Bengal State Library (Cooch Behar District Library) (1 peon and 1 Accounts Clerk) ; Darjeeling Govt. District Library (1 Binder).

(4) Total sanctioned strength of staff in these libraries (other than the staff in the offices of the Directorate of Library Services and the District Library Officers and the Training Centres—5314. Out of these staff members, professional staff members are 2613 (with B. Lib. & Inf. Sc. as minimum qualifications—160 and with Certificate in Library Science as minimum qualifications—2453).

4.9.2. Better Pay and Service Conditions for Library Employees :

Along with the above mentioned steps, the following measures were taken up by the Left Front Govt. to improve the pay and service conditions of the employees of the public libraries :—

(i) Introduction of revised pay scales for the employees of the public libraries with effect from 1st April 1981 on the basis of recommendations of the Pay Committee appointed by the State Govt.

Salient features of these pay scales are :

Posts 1	Prescribed Qualifications 2	Unrevised Pay Scale 3	Revised Pay Scale 4
Librarian (District Library)	Master Degree+ Degree/Diploma in Library Sc.	Rs. 270-540/- + Allowance of Rs. 25.00	Rs. 440-1170/- with higher initial start at Rs. 560/-
Librarian (Town/Sub-divisional Library)	Graduation+ Degree/Diploma in Library Science	Rs. 237-404/-	Rs. 425-1050/- with higher initial start at Rs. 530/-
Librarian (Rural/Primary Unit/Area Library	S.F.+Certificate in Library Science	Rs. 184-270/-	Rs. 300-685/-
Library Asstt. (in different libraries)	(a) Graduation+ B. Lib. Sc. (b) S.F.+Certificate in Lib. Sc.	(a) No Scale (b) 184-270/-	(a) Rs. 425-895/- (b) Rs. 300-685/-
Library Attendant (in different libraries)	—	Rs. 155-185/-	Rs. 230-414/-
Driver (in State Central Library and District Libraries)	—	Rs. 175-230/-	Rs. 280-617/-
Peon/Cycle Peon/ Cleaner/Durwan/	—	Rs. 130-165/-	Rs. 220-388/-
Sweeper (in different libraries)	—	-Do.-	-Do.-

(ii) Discrimination regarding payment of Dearness Allowance was abolished and the employees of the public libraries were given Dearness Allowance at the same rate as those given to the employees of the State Govt.

(iii) The following economic benefits from which the employees were so long being deprived were introduced : Medical Allowance, House Rent Allowance, Hill Allowance for the employees of the hill area in the state.

(iv) Pension and other retirement benefits have been introduced.

(v) Service Rules for the employees have been introduced.

More than five thousand employees of the Govt.-controlled and sponsored libraries in the state have been benefited by these measures of the Left Front Govt.

4.9.3. Training Facilities :

Along with the public library development programme, the Left Front Govt. also prepared and implemented scheme for development and expansion of library science training. A Seminar was organised by the State Govt. in 1981 to discuss the syllabus for training in library science at the certificate level and to draw up a scheme for such training. The Seminar, which was attended by teachers of library science and librarians, finalized the syllabus, including a scheme for training. At present following centres of training at the certificate level are fully financed by the State Government :—

(a) Rahara Traning Centre, at the Rahara Ramakrishna Mission Boys' Home District Library ;

(b) Kalimpong Training Centre, at the Kalimpong Janata College ;

(c) Banipur Training College, at the Banipur Janata College.

The Bengal Library Association also receives grant for its training at certificate level. The State Govt. is also giving financial assistance to the Jadavpur University for B. Lib. & Inform. Sc. course of eighteen months duration for working librarians in the evening.

4.9.4. Library Facilities for Children :

The Left Front Govt. took following steps for extension of library facilities to the children :—

(i) In the International Children's Year an ad hoc grant of Rupees 40 (forty) lakh and 50 (fifty) thousand was given to 762 old Govt.-controlled and sponsored public libraries for establishment of children section.

(ii) In the 'Public Library Management Rules" it has been stipulated that the children upto the age 16 are not required to pay any subscription or deposit to become member of a Govt.-controlled or sponsored public library.

(iii) At least ten percent of annual grant for purchase of books and periodicals should be spent for purchase of reading materials for children.

4.9.5. Book Fairs :

The Left Front Govt. also decided to assist Book fairs at the State and district levels. Purposes of such book fairs are :

(a) to provide facilities to librarians and book lovers to see and consult large number of titles in one compact area for selection and purchase ;

(b) to provide facilities to publishers, big or small, individual or institutional, to exhibit their products to the people and thus benefiting the book trade ;

(c) to promote love for books among the people and thus devveloping reading habit among them.

Book fairs are now regularly organised at the State and district levels. Even small towns are organising book fairs. Book fairs have now become part and parcel of cultural life of the people of West Bengal. The first West Bengal Book Fair was inaugurated on the 20th December, 1980 by the Chief Minister Shri Jyoti Basu. Last year (1986) the West Bengal Book Fair was organised by the Govt. of West Bengal, in collaboration with the Bengal Library Association, West Bengal Public Library Employees Association, Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation and different Publishers Associations of the state.

4.9.6. Book Selection Tools :

The State Govt. also took a programme of publishing following tools for Selection of Bengali books :—

(a) a comprehensive "Bengali Books in Print", published in 1980, enlisting nearly 10,000 titles in print ; the second edition has been published in 1987.

(b) a selected list of Bengali books on different subjects is being published every year.

(c) A programme has been taken to prepare selected list of books in Nepali, Hindi and Urdu languages.

4.9.7. Book Selection Policy :

In selecting books following guidelines are followed :—

(*a*) Classics, subjects and informative books, reference books, books representing different views and ideas, books for healthy recreation and entertainment be selected in libraries. Book propagating cultural and social degeneration and decadance, preaching communalism, obscurantism and parochialism should be avoided.

(*b*) For at least 30 percent of the annual book grant, titles be selected from "Selected List of Bengali Books", published by the State Govt. every year.

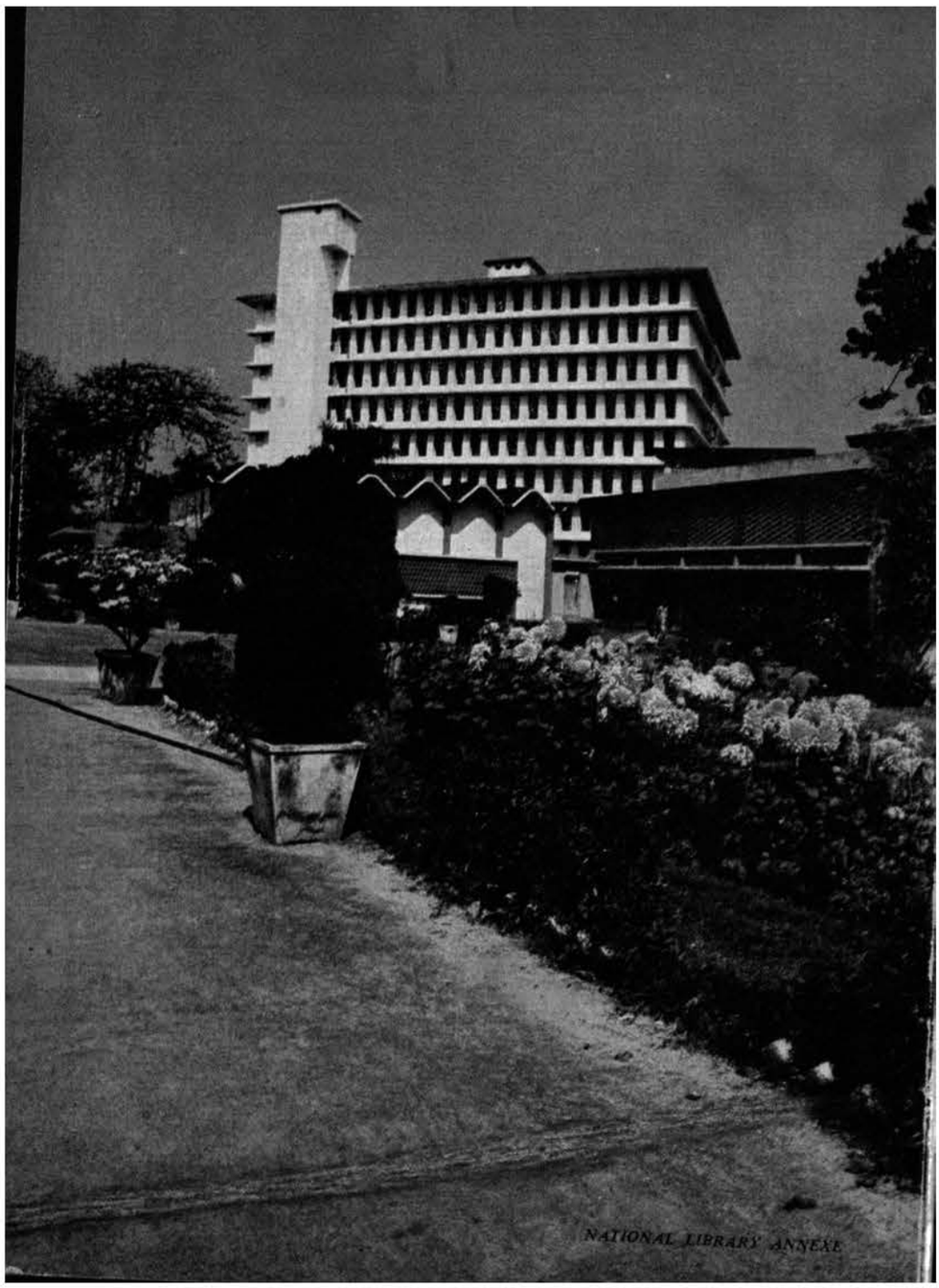
(*c*) For another 70 percent of the annual book grant libraries are permitted to select titles according to their choice, but the general guidelines for selection of good books mus be followed.

4.9.8. Co-operation with Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation :

The State Govt. also cooperates with the Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation by providing matching grant to purchase books for distribution among public libraries. A state level committee has been constituted to select books for this purpose.

4.9.9. Co-operation with Library Association :

Lastly, in all matters of library development, opinions of persons connected with library movement and their organisations are sought. In fact, the Bengal Library Association and the West Bengal Public Library Employees Association have played important roles in the Library development of this State during this period.



NATIONAL LIBRARY ANNEXE